Talks with
Sri Ramana
9/15

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Talks with Raman Maharshi

Vol II

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Shri [illegible] Ashram

TALKS
WITH
SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

(IN THREE VOLUMES)

VOL. II

9/15-

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BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

TALKS WITH SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

VOLUME II

23rd August 1936

241. *D.*: The world is materialistic. What is the remedy for it?

M.: Materialistic or spiritual, it is according to your outlook.

"*Drishtim jnanamayīm krtva, jagad Brahma mayam pasyet.*" Make your outlook right. The Creator knows how to take care of His Creation.

D.: What is the best thing to do for ensuring the future?

M.: Take care of the present, the future will take care of itself.

D.: The future is the result of the present. So, what should I do to make it good? Or should I keep still?

M.: For whom is the doubt? Who is it that wants a course of action? Find the doubter. If you hold the doubter the doubts will disappear. Having lost hold of the Self the thoughts afflict you; the world is seen, doubts arise, also anxiety for the future.

Hold fast to the Self, these will disappear.

D.: How to do it?

M.: This question is relevant to matters of non-self, but not to the Self. Do you doubt the existence of your own Self?

D.: No. But still, I want to know how the Self could be realised. Is there any method leading to it ?

M.: Make effort. Just as water is got by boring a well, so also you realise the Self by investigation.

D.: Yes. But some find water readily and others with difficulty.

M.: But you already see the moisture on the surface. You are hazily aware of the Self. Pursue it. When the effort ceases the Self shines forth.

D.: How to train the mind to look within ?

M.: By practice. The mind is the intelligent phase leading to its own destruction, for Self to manifest.

D.: How to destroy the mind ?

M.: Water cannot be made *dry water*. Seek the Self ; the mind will be destroyed.

29th August 1936

242. *D.:* How to avoid misery ?

M.: Has misery a shape ? Misery is only unwanted thought. The mind is not strong enough to resist it.

D.: How to gain such strength of mind ?

M.: By worship of God.

D.: Meditation of the God of Immanence is hard to understand.

M.: Leave God alone. Hold your Self.

D.: How to do *japa* (repetition of mantras) ?

M.: It is of two kinds—gross and subtle. The latter is meditation on it, and it gives strength to the mind.

D.: But the mind does not get steady for meditation.

M.: It is due to lack of strength.

D.: Sandhya is usually done mechanically. Similarly other religious duties. Is it useful ? Is it not better to do *japa* (chantings), etc., knowing their meanings ?

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BANARAS

M.: Um! Um!

243. A Gujerati gentleman asked Sri Bhagavan: They say that choice is offered to enjoy merits or demerits after our death. Their succession will be according to our choice. Is it so?

M.: Why raise these questions relating to events after death? Why ask "Was I born? Am I reaping fruits of my past karma," and so on? They will not be raised some time hence when you fall asleep. Why? Are you now different from the one in sleep? You are not. Why do these questions arise now and not in sleep? Find out.

244. A middle-aged, weak-looking man came with a walking stick in his hand, placed it before Bhagavan, bowed low and sat near Maharshi. He got up and with great humility offered the stick to Bhagavan, saying that it was sandal-wood. Sri Bhagavan told him to keep it for himself. Because nothing of Bhagavan's can be safeguarded. Being common property but coveted by some, it will be taken away by any visitor with or without Bhagavan's permission. Then the donor may be displeased.

But the man still humbly insisted. Sri Bhagavan could not resist his supplications, and said, "Keep it yourself as *prasad* from Bhagavan." The man then requested that the stick might first be taken and then given to him by Sri Bhagavan with blessings. Sri Bhagavan received it, smelt it, said it was fine, nodded, and handed it back to the man, saying, "Keep it. It will make you always remember me."

245. A Maharani Saheba spoke in a gentle and low voice, but quite audibly:

"Maharajji, I have the good fortune to see you. My eyes have had the pleasure of sight, my ears the pleasure of hearing your voice.

"I am blessed with everything that a human being would like to have." Her Highness's voice choked. With great strength of mind she rallied and proceeded slowly, "I have all that I want, a human being would want.... But.....But.....I.....I.... do not have peace of mind ......Something prevents it. Probably my destiny...."

There was silence for a few minutes. Then Maharshi in his usual sweet manner spoke :—

"All right. What need be said has been said. Well. What is destiny ? There is no destiny. Surrender, and all will be well. Throw all the responsibility on God. Do not bear the burden yourself. What can destiny do to you then ?"

D. : Surrender is impossible.

M. : Yes. Complete surrender is impossible in the beginning. Partial surrender is certainly possible for all. In course of time that will lead to complete surrender. Well, if surrender is impossible, what can be done ? There is no peace of mind. You are helpless to bring it about. It can be done only by surrender.

D. : Partial surrender—well—can it undo destiny ?

M. : Oh, yes ! It can.

D. : Is not destiny due to past *karma* ?

M. : If one is surrendered to God, God will look to it.

D. : This being God's dispensation, how does God undo it ?

M. : All are in Him only.

D. : How is God to be seen ?

M. : Within. If the mind is turned inward God manifests as inner consciousness.

D. : God is in all—in all the objects we see around us. They say we should see God in all of them.

M. : God is in all and in the seer. Where else can God be seen ? He cannot be found outside. He should be felt within. To see the objects, mind is necessary. To conceive God in them is a mental operation. But that is not real. The consciousness within, purged of the mind, is felt as God.

D. : There are, say, beautiful colours. It is a pleasure to watch them. We can see God in them.

M. : They are all mental conceptions.

D. : There are more than colours. I mentioned colours only for an example.

M. : They are also similarly mental.

D. : There is the body also—the senses and the mind. The soul makes use of all these for knowing things.

M. : The objects or feelings or thoughts are all mental conceptions. The mind rises after the rise of the I-thought or the ego. Wherefrom does the ego rise? From the abstract consciousness or Pure Intelligence.

D. : Is it the soul?

M. : Soul, mind or ego are mere words. There are no real entities of the kind. Consciousness is the only truth.

D. : Then that consciousness cannot give any pleasure.

M. : Its nature is Bliss. Bliss alone is. There is no enjoyer to enjoy pleasure.

Enjoyer and joy—both merge in it.

D. : There are pleasure and pain in ordinary life. Should we not remain with only pleasure?

M. : Pleasure consists in turning and keeping the mind within; pain in sending it outward. There is only pleasure. Absence of pleasure is called pain. One's nature is pleasure—Bliss (Ananda).

D. : Is it the soul?

M. : Soul and God are only mental conceptions.

D. : Is God only a mental conception?

M.: Yes. Do you think of God in sleep ?

D.: But sleep is a state of dullness.

M.: If God be real He must remain always. You remain in sleep and in wakefulness—just the same. If God be as true as your Self, God must be in sleep as well as the Self. This thought of God arises only in the wakeful state. Who thinks now ?

D.: I think.

M.: Who is this 'I' ? Who says it ? Is it the body ?

D.: The body speaks.

M.: The body does not speak. If so, did it speak in sleep ? Who is this I ?

D.: I within the body.

M.: Are you within the body or without ?

D.: I am certainly within the body.

M.: Do you know it to be so in your sleep ?

D.: I remain in my body in sleep also.

M.: Are you aware of being within the body in sleep ?

D.: Sleep is a state of dullness.

M.: The fact is, you are neither within nor without. Sleep is the natural state of being.

D.: Then sleep must be a better state than this.

M.: There is no superior or inferior state. In sleep, in dream and in the wakeful state you are just the same. Sleep is a state of happiness; there is no misery. The sense of want, of pain, etc., arises only in the wakeful state. What is the change that has taken place ? You are the same in both, but there is difference in happiness. Why ? Because the mind has risen now. This mind rises after the 'I'-thought. The 'I'-thought arises from consciousness. If one abides in it, one is always happy.

D.: The sleep state is the state when the mind is quiet. I consider it a worse state.

M.: If that were so, why do all desire sleep?

D.: It is the body when tired that goes to sleep.

M.: Does the body sleep?

D.: Yes. It is the condition in which the wear and tear of the body is repaired.

M.: Let it be so. But does the body itself sleep or wake up? You yourself said shortly before that the mind is quiet in sleep. The three states are of the mind.

D.: Are they not states of the soul functioning through the senses, etc.?

M.: They are not of the soul or of the body. The soul remains always uncontaminated. It is the substratum running through all these three states. Wakefulness passes off, I am; the dream state passes off, I am; the sleep state passes off, I am. They repeat themselves, and yet I am. They are like pictures moving on the screen in a cinema show. They do not affect the screen. Similarly also, I remain unaffected although these states pass off. If it is of the body, are you aware of the body in sleep?

D.: No.

M.: Without knowing the body to be there how can the body be said to be in sleep?

D.: Because it is still found after waking up.

M.: The sense of body is a thought; the thought is of the mind, the mind rises after the 'I'-thought, the 'I'-thought is the root thought. If that is held, the other thoughts will disappear. There will then be no body, no mind, not even the ego.

D.: What will remain then?

M.: The Self in its purity.

D.: How can the mind be made to vanish?

M.: No attempt is made to destroy it. To think or wish it is itself a thought. If the thinker is sought, the thoughts will disappear.

D.: Will they disappear of themselves? It looks so difficult.

M.: They will disappear because they are unreal. The idea of difficulty is itself an obstacle to realisation. It must be overcome. To remain as the Self is not difficult.

D.: It looks easy to think of God in the external world, whereas it looks difficult to remain without thoughts.

M.: That is absurd; to look at other things is easy and to look within is difficult! It must be contrariwise.

D.: But I do not understand. It is difficult.

M.: This thought of difficulty is the chief obstacle. A little practice will make you think differently.

D.: What is the practice?

M.: To find out the source of 'I'.

D.: That was the state before one's birth.

M.: Why should one think of birth and death? Are you really born? The rising of the mind is called birth. After mind the body-thought arises and the body is seen; then the thought of birth, the state before birth, death, the state after death;—all these are only of the mind. Whose is the birth?

D.: Am I not now born?

M.: So long as the body is considered, birth is real. But the body is not 'I'. The Self is not born nor does it die. There is nothing new. The Sages see everything in and of the Self. There is no diversity in it. Therefore there is neither birth nor death.

D.: If sleep be such a good state, why does not one like to be always in it?

M.: One *is* always only in sleep. The present waking state is no more than a dream. Dream can take place only in sleep. Sleep is underlying these three states. Manifestation of these three states is again a dream, which is in its turn another sleep. In this way these states of dream and sleep are endless.

Similar to these states, birth and death also are dreams in a sleep. Really speaking, there are no birth and death.

8th September 1936

246. Misses Gulbai and Shirinbai Byramjee, two Parsi ladies, were asking questions round one central point. All their questions amounted to one:

"I understand that the Self is beyond the ego. My knowledge is theoretical and not practical. How shall I gain practical realisation of the Self?"

M.: Realisation is nothing to be got afresh. It is already there. All that is necessary is to be rid of the thought "I have not realised."

D.: Then one need not attempt it.

M.: No. Stillness of mind or peace is realisation. There is no moment when the Self is not.

So long as there is doubt or the feeling of non-realisation, attempt must be made to rid oneself of these thoughts.

The thoughts are due to identification of the Self with the non-self. When the non-self disappears the self alone remains. To make room anywhere it is enough that things are removed. Room is not brought in afresh. Nay, more—room is there even in cramping.

Absence of thoughts does not mean a blank. There must be one to know the blank. Knowledge and ignorance are of the mind. They are born of duality. But the Self is beyond knowledge and ignorance. It is light itself. There is no necessity to see the Self with another Self. There are no two selves. What is not Self is non-self. The non-self cannot see the Self. The Self has no sight or hearing. It lies beyond these—*all alone,* as pure consciousness.

A woman, with her necklace round her neck, imagines that it has been lost and goes about searching for it, until she is reminded of it by a friend; she has created her own sense of loss, her own anxiety of search and then her own pleasure of recovery. Similarly the Self is all along there, whether you search for it or not. Again just as the woman feels as if the lost necklace has been regained, so also the removal of ignorance and the cessation of false identification reveal the Self which is always present—here and now. This is called realisation. It is not new. It amounts to elimination of ignorance and nothing more.

Blankness is the evil of searching the mind. The mind must be cut off, root and branch. See who the thinker is, who the seeker is. Abide as the thinker, the seeker. All thoughts will disappear.

D.: Then there will be the ego—the thinker.

M.: That ego is pure ego purged of thoughts. It is the same as the Self. So long as false identification persists doubts will persist, questions will arise, there will be no end of them. Doubts will cease only when the non-self is put an end to. That will result in realisation of the Self. There will remain no other there to doubt or ask. All these doubts should be solved within oneself. No amount of words will satisfy. Hold the thinker. Only when the thinker is not held do objects appear outside or doubts arise in the mind.

247. Language is only a medium for communicating one's thoughts to another. It is called in only after thoughts arise; other thoughts arise after the 'I'-thought rises; the 'I'-thought is the root of all conversation. When one remains without thinking one understands another by means of the universal language of silence.

Silence is ever-speaking; it is a perennial flow of language; it is interrupted by speaking. These words obstruct that mute language. There is electricity flowing in a wire. With resistance to its passage, it glows as a lamp or revolves as a fan. In the wire it remains as electric energy. Similarly also, silence is the eternal flow of language, obstructed by words.

What one fails to know by conversation extending to several years can be known in a trice in Silence, or in front of Silence—*e.g.* Dakshinamurti and his four disciples.

That is the highest and most effective language.

There arose a doubt if 'I'—'I' consciousness be the same as Nirvikalpa Samādhi or anything anterior to it.

Sri Bhagavan said that the tiny hole in the Heart remains always closed, but it is opened by Vichara with the result that 'I'—'I' consciousness shines forth. It is the same as samādhi.

D.: What is the difference between fainting and sleep ?

M.: Sleep is sudden and overpowers the person forcibly. A faint is slower and there is a tinge of resistance kept up. Realisation is possible in a faint and impossible in sleep.

D.: What is the state just before death ?

M.: When a person gasps for breath it indicates that the person is unconscious of this body; another body has been held and the person swings to and fro. While gasping there is a more violent gasp at intervals and that indicates the oscillation between the two bodies due to the present attachment not having been completely snapped. I noticed it in the case of my mother and of Palni Swami.

D.: Does the new body involved in that state represent the next re-incarnation of the person ?

M.: Yes. While gasping the person is in something like a dream, not aware of the present environment.

(It must be remembered that Sri Bhagavan had been with His mother from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. until she passed away. He was all along holding her head with one hand, the other hand placed on her bosom. What does it signify? He Himself said later that there was a struggle between Himself and His mother until her spirit reached the Heart.

Evidently the soul passes through a series of subtle experiences, and Sri Bhagavan's touch generates a current which turns the soul back from its wanderings into the Heart.

The *samskāras*, however, persist and a struggle is kept up between the spiritual force set up by his touch and the innate *samskāras*, until the latter are entirely destroyed and the soul is led into the Heart to rest in eternal Peace, which is the same as Liberation.

Its entry into the Heart is signified by a peculiar sensation perceptible to the Mahatma—similar to the tinkling of a bell.

When Maharshi attended on Palni Swami on his death-bed, he took away His hand after the above signal. But Palni Swami's eyes opened immediately, signifying that the spirit had escaped through them, thereby indicating a higher re-birth, but not Liberation. Having once noticed it with Palni Swami, Maharshi continued touching His mother for a few minutes longer—even after the signal of the soul passing into the Heart—and thus ensured her Liberation. This was confirmed by the look of perfect peace and composure on her features).

15th September 1936

248. Sri Bhagavan said :

The *jnāni* says, "I am the body"; the *ajnāni* says, "I am the body"; what is the difference ? 'I am' is the truth. The body is the limitation. The *ajnāni* limits the 'I' to the body. 'I' remains independent of the body in sleep. The same 'I' is now in the wakeful state. Though imagined to be within the body, 'I' is without the body. The wrong notion is not 'I am the body.' 'I' says so. The body is insentient and cannot say so. The mistake lies in thinking that 'I' is what 'I' is not. 'I' is not insentient. 'I' cannot be the inert body. The body's movements are confounded with 'I' and misery is the result. Whether the body works or not, 'I' remains free and happy. The *ajnāni's* 'I' is body only. That is the whole error. The *jnāni's* 'I' includes the body and everything else. Clearly some intermediate entity arises and gives rise to the confusion.

Mr. Vaidyanatha Iyer, a lawyer, asked : If the *jnāni* says "I am the body," what happens to him in death ?

M. : He does not identify himself with the body, even now.

D. : But you said just before that the *jnāni says* "I am the body."

M. : Yes. His 'I' includes the body. For there cannot be anything apart from 'I' for him. If the body falls away there is no loss for the 'I'. 'I' remains the same. If the body feels dead let it raise the question. Being inert it cannot. 'I' never dies and does not ask the question. Who then dies ? Who asks questions ?

D. : For whom are all the Sastras then ? They cannot be for the real 'I'. They must be for the unreal 'I'. The real one does not require them. It is strange that the unreal should have so many sastras for him.

M.: Yes. Quite so. Death is only a thought and nothing more. He who thinks raises troubles. Let the thinker tell us what happens to him in death. The real 'I' is silent. One should not think 'I am this,—I am not that'. To say 'this or that' is wrong. They are also limitations. Only 'I am' is the truth. Silence is 'I'. If one thinks 'I am this', another thinks 'I am this' and so on, there is a clash of thoughts and so many religions are the result. The truth remains as it is, not affected by any statements, conflicting or otherwise.

D.: What is death? Is it not the falling away of the body?

M.: Do you not desire it in sleep? What goes wrong then?

D.: But I know I shall wake up.

M.: Yes—thought again. There is the preceding thought 'I shall wake up'. Thoughts rule the life. Freedom from thoughts is one's true nature—Bliss.

24th September 1936

249. *M.:* Ignorance—*ajnāna*—is of two kinds:

(1) Forgetfulness of the Self,

(2) Obstruction to the knowledge of the Self.

Aids are meant for eradicating thoughts; these thoughts are the re-manifestations of predispositions remaining in seed-form; they give rise to diversity from which all troubles arise. These aids are: hearing the truth from the master (*sravana*), etc.

The effects of *sravana* may be immediate and the disciple realizes the truth all at once. This can happen only for the well-advanced disciple.

Otherwise, the disciple feels that he is unable to realise the truth, even after repeatedly hearing it. What is it due to? Impurities in his mind: ignorance, doubt and wrong identity are the obstacles to be removed.

(a) To remove ignorance completely, he has to hear the truth repeatedly, until his knowledge of the subject-matter becomes perfect ;

(b) to remove doubts, he must reflect on what he has heard ; ultimately his knowledge will be free from doubts of any kind ;

(c) to remove the wrong identity of the Self with the non-self (such as the body, the senses, the mind or the intellect), his mind must become one-pointed.

All these things accomplished, the obstacles are at an end and samādhi results, that is, Peace reigns.

Some say that one should never cease to engage in hearing, reflection and one-pointedness. These are not fulfilled by reading books, but only by continued practice to keep the mind withdrawn.

The aspirant may be *kritopāsaka* or *akritopāsaka*. The former is fit to realise the Self, even with the slightest stimulus ; only some little doubt stands in his way; it is easily removed if he hears the truth once from the Master. Immediately he gains the samādhi state. It is presumed that he had already completed *sravana,* reflection, etc. in previous births ; they are no more necessary for him.

For the other all these aids are necessary ; for him doubts crop up even after repeated hearing ; therefore he must not give up aids until he gains the samādhi state.

Sravana removes the illusion of the Self being one with the body, etc. Reflection makes it clear that Knowledge is Self. One-pointedness reveals the Self as being Infinite and Blissful.

27th September 1936

250. A certain devotee asked Maharshi about some disagreeable statements made by a certain man well known to Maharshi.

He said, "I permit him to do so. I have permitted him already. Let him do so even more. Let others follow suit. Only let them leave me alone. If because of these reports no one comes to me, I shall consider it a great service done to me. Moreover, if he cares to publish books containing scandals of me, and if he makes money by their sale, it is really good. Such books will sell even more quickly and in larger numbers than others. Look at Miss Mayo's book. Why should he not also do it? He is doing me a very good turn." Saying so, He laughed.

29th September 1936

There was again a reference to the same subject when Maharshi was alone. The vilifier seems to be getting into hot waters on account of his inconsiderate action. When it was mentioned, Maharshi seemed to be concerned for the man's safety, and He said with obvious sympathy: "Even if allowed to have his own way for earning money, the man gets into trouble. If he availed himself of our indulgence and acted sensibly, he could have got on well. But what can we do?"

251. An aristocratic lady looking very intelligent, though pensive, asked: "We had heard of you, Maharajji, as the kindest and noblest soul. We had long desired to have your Darshan. I came here once before, on the 14th of last month, but could not remain in your holy presence as long as I wished. Being a woman and also young, I could not stand the people around, and so broke away hurriedly after asking one or two simple questions. There are no holy men like you in our part of the country. I am happy as I have every thing I want. But I do not have that peace of mind which brings happiness. I now come here seeking your blessing so that I may gain it.

M.: *Bhakti* fulfils your desire.

D.: I want to know how I can gain that peace of mind. Kindly be pleased to advise me.

M.: Yes—devotion and surrender.

D.: Am I worthy of being a devotee ?

M.: Everyone can be a devotee. Spiritual fare is common to all and never denied to any one—be the person old or young, male or female.

D.: That is exactly what I am anxious to know. I am young and a *Grihini* (housewife). There are duties of *Grihastha Dharma* (the household). Is devotion consistent with such a position ?

M.: Certainly. What are you ? You are not the body. You are Pure Consciousness. *Grihastha Dharma* and the world are only phenomena appearing on that pure consciousness. It remains unaffected. What prevents you from being your own Self ?

D.: Yes. I am already aware of the line of teaching of Maharshi. It is the quest for the Self. But my doubt persists if such quest is compatible with *Grihastha* life.

M.: The Self is always there. It is you. There is nothing but you. Nothing can be apart from you. The question of compatibility or otherwise does not arise.

D.: I shall be more definite. Though a stranger, I am obliged to confess the cause of my anxiety. I am blessed with children. A boy—a good Brahmachari—passed away in February. I was grief-stricken. I was disgusted with this life. I want to devote myself to spiritual life. But my duties as a *Grihini* do not permit me to lead a retired life. Hence my doubt.

M.: Retirement means abidance in the Self. Nothing more. It is not leaving one set of surroundings and getting entangled in another set, nor even leaving the concrete world and becoming involved in a mental world.

The birth of the son, his death, etc., are also in the Self.

Recall the state of sleep. Were you aware of anything happening ? If the son or the world be real, should they not be present with you in sleep ? You cannot deny your existence in sleep. Nor can you deny you were happy then. You are the same person now speaking and raising doubts. You are not happy, according to you. But you were happy in sleep. What has transpired in the meantime that the happiness of sleep has broken down ? It is the ego. That is the new arrival in the *jāgrat* state. There was no ego in sleep. The birth of the ego is called the birth of the person. There is no other birth. Whatever is born, is bound to die. Kill the ego ; there is no fear of recurring death for what is once dead. The Self remains even after the death of the ego. That is Bliss—that is Immortality.

D. : How is that to be done ?

M. : See for whom these doubts exist. Who is the doubter ? Who is the thinker ? That is the ego. Hold it. The other thoughts will die away. The ego is left pure ; see wherefrom the ego arises. That is pure consciousness.

D. : It seems difficult. May we proceed by *bhakti mārga*.

M. : It is according to individual temperament and equipment. *Bhakti* is the same as *vichāra*.

D. : I mean meditation, etc.

M. : Yes. Meditation is on a form. That will drive away other thoughts. The one thought of God will dominate others. That is concentration. The object of meditation is thus the same as that of *vichāra*.

D. : Do we not see God in concrete form ?

M. : Yes. God is seen in the mind. The concrete form may be seen. Still it is only in the devotee's mind.

The form and appearance of God-manifestation are determined by the mind of the devotee. But it is not the finality. There is the sense of duality.

It is like a dream-vision. After God is perceived, *vichāra* commences. That ends in the Realisation of Self. *Vichāra* is the ultimate route.

Of course, a few find *vichara* practicable. Others find *bhakti* easier.

D.: Did not Mr. Brunton find you in London? Was it only a dream?

M.: Yes. He had the vision. He saw me in his mind.

D.: Did he not see this concrete form?

M.: Yes, still in his mind.

D.: How shall I reach the Self?

M.: There is no reaching the Self. If the Self were to be reached, it would mean that the Self is not now and here, but that it should be got anew. What is got afresh, will also be lost. So it will be impermanent. What is not permanent is not worth striving for. So I say, the Self is not reached. You are the Self. You are already That. The fact is that you are ignorant of your blissful state. Ignorance supervenes and draws a veil over the pure Bliss. Attempts are directed only to remove this ignorance. This ignorance consists in wrong knowledge. The wrong knowledge consists in the false identification of the Self with the body, the mind, etc. This false identity must go and there remains the Self.

D.: How is that to happen?

M.: By enquiry into the Self.

D.: It is difficult. Can I realise the Self, Maharaj? Kindly tell me. It looks so difficult.

M.: You are already the Self. Therefore realisation is common to everyone. Realisation knows no difference in the aspirants. This very doubt, "Can I realise?" or the feeling, "I have not realised" are the obstacles. Be free from these also.

D.: But there should be the experience. Unless I have the experience how can I be free from these afflicting thoughts?

M.: These are also in the mind. They are there because you have identified yourself with the body. If this false identity drops away, ignorance vanishes and Truth is revealed.

D.: Yet I feel it difficult. There are disciples of Bhagavan who have had His Grace and realised without any considerable difficulty. I too wish to have that Grace. Being a woman and living at a long distance I cannot avail myself of Maharshi's holy company as much as I would wish and as often as I would. Possibly I may not be able to return. I request Bhagavan's Grace. When I am back in my place, I want to remember Bhagavan. May Bhagavan be pleased to grant my prayer!

M.: Where are you going? You are not going anywhere. Even supposing you are the body, has your body come from Lucknow to Tiruvannamalai? You had simply sat in the car and one conveyance or another had moved; and finally you say that you have come here. The fact is that you are not the body. The Self does not move. The world moves in it. You are only what you are. There is no change in you. So then, even after what looks like departure from here, you are here and there and everywhere. These scenes shift.

As for Grace,—Grace is within you. If it is external it is useless. Grace is the Self. You are never out of its operation. Grace is always there.

D.: I mean that when I remember your form, my mind should be strengthened and that response should come from your side too. I should not be left to my individual efforts which are after all only weak.

M.: Grace is the Self. I have already said, "If you remember Bhagavan, you are prompted to do so by the Self." Is not Grace already there? Is there a moment when Grace is not operating in you? Your remembrance is the forerunner of Grace. That is the response, that is the stimulus, that is the Self and that is Grace.

There is no cause for anxiety.

D.: Can I engage in spiritual practice, even remaining in *samsāra*?

M.: Yes, certainly. One ought to do so.

D.: Is not *samsāra* a hindrance? Do not all the holy books advocate renunciation?

M.: *Samsāra* is only in your mind. The world does not speak out, saying 'I am the world'. Otherwise, it must be ever there—not excluding your sleep. Since it is not in sleep it is impermanent. Being impermanent it has no stamina. Having no stamina it is easily subdued by the Self. The Self alone is permanent. Renunciation is non-identification of the Self with the non-self. On the disappearance of ignorance the non-self ceases to exist. That is true renunciation.

D.: Why did you then leave your home in your youth?

M.: That is my *prārabdha* (fate). One's course of conduct in this life is determined by one's *prārabdha*. My *prārabdha* is this way. Your *prārabdha* is that way.

D.: Should I not also renounce?

M.: If that had been your *prārabdha*, the question would not have arisen.

D.: I should therefore remain in the world and engage in spiritual practice. Well, can I get realisation in this life?

M.: This has been already answered. You are always the Self. Earnest efforts never fail. Success is bound to result.

D.: Will Maharshi be pleased to extend Grace to me also!

Maharshi smiled and said "Um! Um!" With blessings and salutations, the interview came to a close and the party departed directly.

30th September 1936

252. *D.:* Sri Ramakrishna touched Vivekananda and the latter realised Bliss. Is it possible?

M.: Sri Ramakrishna did not touch all for that purpose. He did not create Atma. He did not create Realisation. Vivekananda was ripe. He was anxious to realise. He must have completed the preliminary course in his past births. Such is possible for ripe persons only.

D.: Can the same miracle be worked for all?

M.: If they are fit. Fitness is the point. A strong man controls the weaker man. A strong mind controls the weaker mind. That was what happened in the case cited. The effect was only temporary. Why did Vivekananda not sit quiet? Why did he wander about after such miracle? Because the effect was only temporary.

D.: How is the mind to dive into the Heart?

M.: The mind now sees itself diversified on the universe. If the diversity is not manifest it remains in its own essence, that is the Heart. Entering the Heart means remaining without distractions.

The Heart is the only Reality. The Mind is only a transient phase. To remain as one's Self is to enter the Heart.

Because a man identifies himself with the body he sees the world separate from him. This wrong identification arises because he has lost his moorings and has swerved from his original state. He is now advised to give up all these false ideas, to trace back his source and remain as the Self. In that state, there are no differences. No questions will arise.

All the Sastras are meant only to make the man retrace his steps to the original source. He need not gain anything new. He must only give up his false ideas and useless accretions. Instead of doing it he tries to catch hold of something strange and mysterious because he believes that his happiness lies elsewhere. That is the mistake.

If one remains as the Self there is bliss. Probably he thinks that being quiet does not bring about the state of bliss. That is due to his ignorance. The only practice is to find out "to whom these questions arise."

D.: How to control lust, anger, etc.?

M.: Whose are these passions? Find out. If you remain as the Self, there will be found to be nothing apart from the Self. Then there will be no need to control, etc.

D.: If a person whom we love dies, grief results. Shall we avoid such grief by either loving all alike or by not loving at all?

M.: If one dies, it results in grief for the other who lives. The way to get rid of grief is *not to live.* Kill the one who grieves. Who will remain then to suffer? The ego must die. That is the only way.

The two alternatives amount to the same state. When all have become the one Self, who is there to be loved or hated?

D.: What is the Sun *mārga*? What is the Moon *mārga*? Which of them is easier?

M.: Ravi mārga (*Sun mārga*) is *jnāna.* Moon *mārga* is Yoga. They think that after purifying the 72,000 *nadis* in the body *Sushumna* is entered and the mind passes up to the *Sahasrāra* and there is nectar trickling.

These are all mental concepts. The man is already overwhelmed by world concepts. Other concepts are now added in the shape of this Yoga. The object of all these is to rid the man of concepts and to make him inhere as the pure Self—i.e., absolute consciousness, bereft of thoughts! Why not go straight to it? Why add new encumbrances to the already existing ones?

1st October 1936

253. Mr. F. G. Pearce, Principal, Scindia School, Gwalior: Bhagavan has stated [in "*Sad Vidya*", (*Anubhandam*), Supplement sloka 27]: "The illiterate are certainly better off than the literate whose egos are not destroyed by the quest of the Self." This being so, could Bhagavan advise a school master (who feels this to be true) how to carry on education in such a way that the desire for literacy and intellectual knowledge may not obscure the more important search for the Self? Are the two incompatible? If they are not, then from what age, and by what means, can young people best be stimulated towards the search for the Real Truth within?

M.: Pride of learning and desire for appreciation are condemned and not learning itself. Learning leading to search for Truth and humility is good.

A request from the same seeker:

The above questioner has spent two very precious days in physical proximity to Bhagavan Maharshi (whom he has not seen since—17 years ago—he visited Him for a few minutes on the hillside). His duties now compel him to take his body far away again to the north, and it may be years before he can return.

He humbly requests Bhagavan to make a strong link with him, and to continue to help him with His grace, in the quest of the Self.

Maharshi had a gentle smile for this.

254. Mr. Duncan Greenlees quoted a few verses from "*Srimad Bhagavatam*" to the following effect:

"See the Self in yourself like the pure ether in all
beings, in and out."
"Unashamed, fall prostrate before even an outcast,
a cow or an ass."
"So long as 'I' am not perceived in all, worship all
with body and mind."
"With right knowledge see all as Brahma. This once
clear, all doubts are at an end and you will
remain withdrawn in the Self."

He then raised the following questions:

D.: Is this a True Path to the realisation of the One Self? Is it not easier for some thus to practise seeing Bhagavan in whatever meets the mind than to seek the Super-Mental through the mental inquiry "Who am I?"'

M.: Yes. When you see God in all, do you think of God or do you not? You should certainly keep God in your mind for seeing God all round you. Keeping God in your mind becomes *dhyāna*. *Dhyāna* is the stage before realization. Realization is only in the Self. *Dhyāna* must precede it. Whether you make *dhyāna* of God or Self, it is immaterial. The goal is the same.

But you cannot escape the Self. You want to see God in all, but not in yourself? If all are God, are you not included in that all? Yourself being God, is it a wonder that all are God? There must be a seer and thinker for even the practice. Who is he?

D.: Through poetry, music, *japa*, *bhajan*, beautiful landscapes, reading the lives of spiritual heroes, etc., one sometimes experiences a true sense of all-unity. Is that feeling of deep blissful quiet (wherein the personal Self has no place) the "entering into the heart" whereof Bhagavan speaks? Will practice of that lead to a deeper *samādhi*, and so ultimately to a full vision of the Real?

M.: Again, there is happiness at agreeable sights, etc. It is the happiness inherent in the Self. That happiness is not alien and afar. You are diving into the pure Self on occasions which you consider pleasurable. That diving reveals the Self-existent Bliss. But the association of ideas is responsible for foisting this bliss on to other things or happenings. In fact, it is within you. On these occasions you are plunging into the Self, though unconsciously. If you do so consciously you call it Realisation. I want you to dive consciously into the Self, *i.e.*, into the Heart.

255. *D.:* If the Self be always realised we should only keep still. Is that so?

M.: If you can keep still without engaging in any other pursuits, it is very good. If that cannot be done, where is the use of being quiet so far as realisation is concerned? So long as one is obliged to be active, let him not give up the attempt to realise the Self.

256. A question was asked regarding the position of one whose *jnāna* is weak in the scheme of things. The doubt was if that *manda jnāni* had stopped short of *kevala nirvikalpa.*

M.: *Kevala nirvikalpa* happens even in the *tanumanasi* stage (of attenuated mind).

D.: The middling and superior *jnānis* are said to be *jivanmuktas*. *Kevala nirvikalpa* is in *tanumanasi*. Where does one whose *jnāna* is weak fit in?

M.: He comes in *sattvapatti* (realisation)—whereas the middling and the superior ones come in *asamsakti* and *padārthābhāvinī* respectively. This division as dull, middling and superior is according to the momentum of *prārabdha*. If it is strong he is weak; if it is middling he is middling too; if prarabdha is weak he is superior; if it is very weak he is in *turiyaga*.

There is no difference in the *samādhi* state or the *jnāna* of the *Jnānis*. The classification is only from the standpoint of the observer.

D.: Is *tanumanasi* the same as *mumukshutva*?

M.: No. The six qualities, discrimination, dispassion and *mumukshutva*, etc., precede *subhechcha*. The first stage follows *mumukshutva*, then comes *vichārana* (search), then the tenuous mind. Direct perception is in *sattvapatti* (realisation).

There is no need to discuss similar points. *Jivanmukta* and *Videhamukta* are differently described by different authorities; *Videhamukti* is something said to occur even when the man is seen with a body. The fact is that *mukti* is another name for *Aham* ("I").

The four pre-requisites form *Subhechcha* (1); Hearing and reflection, *Vichārana* (2); One pointed mind, *Tanumanasi* (3); Direct Experience—*Sattvapatti* (4); the lowest grade *Jnāni*; *Asamsakti*—(5); the middling *Jnāni* *Padarthābhāvini*—(6); the superior *Jnāni*; *Turiyaga*—(7) beyond words.

257. *D.:* A certain young man from Dindigul spoke to Sri Bhagavan, saying that he had learnt by his stay for a few days that all that he need do was to enquire, "Who am I?" He wanted to know if any discipline was to be observed, and started with the question: "Where should I do the enquiry?" meaning if he should do it in Guru Sannidhi (the presence of the Master).

M.: The enquiry should be from where the 'I' is.

D.: People labour for gaining the *summum bonum* of life. I think that they are not on the right track. Sri Bhagavan has made considerable *tapas* and achieved the goal. Sri Bhagavan is also desirous that all should reach the goal and willing to help them to that end. His vicarious *tapas* must enable others to reach the goal rather easily. They need not undergo all the hardships which Sri Bhagavan has already undergone. Their way has been made easy for them by Sri Bhagavan. Am I not right?

Maharshi smiled and said: If that were so every one would easily reach the goal, but each one must work for himself.

258. *D.:* A young man from Mysore gave a written slip to Sri Bhagavan and waited for an answer. He had asked Sri Bhagavan to say where other Mahatmas could be found whom he might approach for guidance. He confessed that he had left his home without informing his elders in order that he might seek God through Mahatmas. True, he knew nothing of God or of search for Him. Therefore he desired to see Mahatmas.

Sri Bhagavan simply returned the note saying: I must answer any and every question. Unless I do so I am not great.

The boy tore away the slip and wrote another, which said, "You are kind to squirrels and hares. You fondle them when they struggle to run away from you. Yet you are indifferent to human beings. For instance, I have left my home and am waiting here for a fortnight. I have had no food some days. I am struggling. Still you do not care for me."

M.: Look here. I am not endowed with television. God has not bestowed that gift on me. What shall I do? How can I answer your questions? People call me Maharshi and treat me like this. But I do not see myself as a Maharshi. On the other hand every one is a Maharshi to me. It is good that you in this early age are attempting to seek God. Concentrate on Him. Do your work without desiring the fruits thereof. That is all that you should do.

259. *Nāda, Bindu, Kalā* correspond to *prāna,* mind and intellect.

Isvara (God) is beyond *nāda* (sound).

Nāda, jyoti (light), etc., are mentioned in Yoga literature. But God is beyond these.

The circulation of blood, respiration of air, and other functions of the body are bound to produce sound. That sound is involuntary and continuous. That is *nāda.*

260. An extract from "A Hermit in the Himalayas" was found in the "*Sunday Times*". It related to recapitulation of past incarnations. In it P. B. has mentioned the Buddhist methods for gaining that faculty. Sri Bhagavan said, "These is a class of people who want to know all about their future or their past. They ignore the present. The load from the past forms the present misery. The attempt to recall the past is mere waste of time."

261. *D.:* There was a reference to re-incarnation. Re-incarnation of Shanti Devi tallies with the human standards of time. Whereas the latest case reported of a boy of seven is different. The boy is seven years now. He recalls his past births. Enquiries go to show that the previous body was given up 10 months ago.

The question arises how the matter stood for six years and two months previous to the death of the former body. Did the soul occupy two bodies at the same time?

Sri Bhagavan pointed out that the seven years is according to the boy; ten months is according to the observer. The difference is due to these two different *upadhis.* The boy's experience extending to seven years has been calculated by the observer to cover only 10 months of his own time.

Sri Bhagavan again referred to Lila's story in *Yoga Vasishta.*

262. Dr. Syed, a Muslim Professor, is now here. A sceptic friend of his had confronted him with the question: "What miracle does your Maharshi work?" He had replied that the ordinary people being no better than animals are made men and that we being only His

children are endowed with strength by Maharshi. He desired to know if he was right in replying to him, "Refreshing Peace within is the highest miracle. Maharshi possesses it."

"What is that to us ?" the other man asked. I replied, "The same Peace is bestowed on all visitors to be shared by them. Mr. P. B. has mentioned it in his book. Every one feels it every day in Maharshi's presence."

The whole conversation was mentioned to Sri Bhagavan with the following addition :

Parasurama has said that he felt some refreshing peace within when he met Samvritta on the way. So he made him out to be a great saint. Is not such peace the sole criterion of a Mahatma's Presence ? Is there anything else ?

Sri Bhagavan said : A Madhva saint Tatvaroyar had composed a Bharani on his master Swarupananda. Pandits objected to the composition, saying that it was reserved to such as have killed more than a thousand elephants in battle, whereas Swarupanand was an idle man sitting somewhere unknown to people and he did not deserve that panegyric. Tatvaroyar asked them all to assemble before his master so that they might see for themselves if he could slay one thousand elephants at a time. They did so. As soon as they appeared they were struck dumb and remained in beatific peace for a few days without the least movement. When they regained their senses, they saluted both, the master and the disciple, saying that they were more than satisfied. Swarupanand excelled the warriors in that he could subdue the egos, which is a much more formidable task than slaying a thousand elephants.

Maharshi said that the moral was clear. Peace is the sole criterion of a Mahatma's Presence.

20th October, 1936

263. *Dr. Syed*: Sri Bhagavan says that the Heart is the Self. Psychology has it that malice, envy, jealousy and all passions have their seat in the heart. How are these two statements to be reconciled?

M.: The whole cosmos is contained in one pinhole in the Heart. These passions are part of the cosmos. They are *avidyā* (ignorance).

D.: How did *avidyā* arise?

M.: *Avidya* is like *Māyā* [she who is not is *māyā* (illusion)]. Similarly that which is not is ignorance. Therefore the question does not arise. Nevertheless, the question is asked. Then ask, "Whose is the *avidyā*?" *Avidyā* is ignorance. It implies subject and object. Become the subject and there will be no object.

D.: What is *avidyā*?

Ignorance of Self. Who is ignorant of the Self? The self must be ignorant of Self. Are there two selves?

264. *D.*: Does Bhagavan see the world as part and parcel of Himself? How does He see the world?

M.: The Self alone is and nothing else. However, it is differentiated owing to ignorance. Differentiation is three-fold: (1) of the same kind; (2) of a different kind; and (3) as parts in itself. The world is not another self similar to the self. It is not different from the self; nor is it part of the self.

D.: Is not the world reflected on the Self?

M.: For reflection there must be an object and an image. But the Self does not admit of these differences.

D.: Does not then Bhagavan see the world?

M.: Whom do you mean by Bhagavan?

D.: A *Jiva* advanced more than I.

M.: If you understand your *Jiva* the other *Jiva* is also understood.

D.: I do not want to discuss. I want to learn. Please instruct me.

M.: Because you desire to learn, discussion is unavoidable. Leave all this aside. Consider your sleep. Are you then aware of bondage or do you seek means for release? Are you then aware of the body itself? The sense of bondage is associated with the body. Otherwise there is no bondage, no material to bind with and no one to be bound. These appear, however, in your wakeful state. Consider to whom they appear.

D.: To the mind.

M.: Watch the mind. You must stand aloof from it. You are not the mind. And the Self will remain over.

D.: Does Sri Bhagavan believe in Evolution?

M.: Evolution must be from one state to another. When no differences are admitted, how can evolution arise?

D.: Why does Sri Krishna say, "After several rebirths the seeker gains knowledge and thus knows Me." There must be evolution from stage to stage.

M.: How does *Bhagavad Gita* begin? "Neither I was nor you nor these chiefs, etc." "Neither it is born, nor does it die, etc." So there is no birth, no death, no present as you look at it. Reality was, is and will be. It is changeless. Later Arjuna asked Sri Krishna how he could have lived before *Āditya*? Then Krishna, seeing Arjuna was confounding Him with the gross body, spoke to him accordingly. The instruction is for the one who sees diversity. In reality there is no bondage nor *mukti* for himself or for others from the *jnāni's* standpoint.

D.: Are all in liberation?

M.: Where is *all*? There is no liberation either. It could be only if there was bondage. There was really no bondage and so, it follows, there is no liberation.

D.: But to evolve through births, there must be practice, years of *abhyāsa.*

M.: *Abhyāsa* is only to prevent any disturbance to the inherent peace. There is no question of years. Prevent this thought at this moment. You are only in your natural state whether you make *abhyāsa* or not.

Another man asked: "Why do not all realise the Self in that case?"

M.: It is the same question in another guise. Why do you raise this question? Inasmuch as you raise this question of *abhyāsa* it shows you require *abhyāsa.* Make it.

But to remain without questions or doubts is the natural state.

God created man; and man created God. They both are the originators of forms and names only. In fact, neither God nor man was created.

21st October, 1936

265. The aristocratic lady again came after a few days, went straight to Bhagavan, saluted him and said:

"I came last time with my husband and children. I was thinking of their food and time was pressing. So I could not stay here as long as I would have wished. But I was later worried over the hurried nature of the visit. I have returned now to sit quiet and imbibe Sri Bhagavan's Grace. May He give me strength of mind!"

The hall was already kept clear of people. She sat on a crude carpet in front of Sri Bhagavan. Sri Bhagavan said smiling: "Yes. Silence is perpetual speaking. Ordinary speech hinders that heart-to-heart talk."

She agreed and sat quiet. Sri Bhagavan was sitting reclining on the sofa. His eyes were fixed in her direction with a gracious smile on His lips. Both remained silent and motionless for about an hour.

Prasad was distributed. The lady said : " Now I want to return. The river between Bangalore and this place is in floods. On my way here a bus was overturned in the flood. My car came later, and I saw the sad accident. Still I was not afraid to ford the river. My car came out safe. I would like to return in daytime.

" This time I shall not say is the last time I shall come, as I said on former occasions. I do not know, but it may be so. Yet Maharshi should give me strength of mind.

" I long for *bhakti*. I want more of this longing. Even realisation does not matter for me. Let me be strong in my longing."

M. : If the longing is there, Realisation will be forced on you even if you do not want it. *Subhechcha* is the doorway for realisation.

D. : Let it be so. But I am content with longing. Even when I am away from this place I must not relax in my devotion. Let Sri Bhagavan give me the necessary strength. Such longing could only be through His Grace. I am personally too weak.

Again, when I was here on a previous occasion I asked several questions. But I could not follow Sri Bhagavan's answers. I thought I would not ask any more questions but only sit quiet in His Presence imbibing Grace which might be extended to me. So I do not pursue Maharshi with more questions this time. Only let me have His Grace.

M. : Your repeated visits to this place indicate the extension of Grace.

She was surprised and said : " I was going to ask Maharshi if He called me. For all of a sudden my husband told me this morning : ' There are two days free. If you want you may visit Maharshi and return.'

"I was very agreeably surprised and pleased. I took it to be a call from Maharshi."

She also expressed a desire to reside near Maharshi and asked for His blessings.

Maharshi said : A Higher Power is leading you. Be led by the same.

D. : But I am not aware of it. Please make me aware of it.

M. : The Higher Power knows what to do and how to do it. Trust to It.

266. The Muslim Professor asked : "It is said that one should give up desire. But there are the needs of the body which are irrepressible. What is to be done ?"

M. An aspirant must be equipped with three requisites : (1) *Ichcha* ; (2) *Bhakti* ; and (3) *Sraddha*. *Ichcha* means satisfaction of bodily wants without attachment to the body (such as hunger and thirst and evacuation of excreta). Unless it is done meditation cannot progress. *Bhakti* and *sraddha* are already known.

D. : There are two kinds of desire—the baser and the nobler. Is it not our duty to transmute the baser one to the nobler ?

M. : Yes.

D. : Well, Bhagavan, you said there are three requisites of which *ichcha* is the satisfaction of natural wants without attachment to the body, etc. I take food three or four times a day and attend to bodily wants so much so that I am oppressed by the body. Is there a state when I shall be disembodied so that I might be free from the scourge of bodily wants ?

M. : It is the attachments (*rāga, dwesha*) which are injurious. The action is not bad in itself. There is no harm in eating three or four times. But only do not say, "I want this kind of food and not that kind," and so on.

Moreover you take those meals in twelve hours of wakeful state whereas you are not eating in the hours of sleep. Does sleep lead you to *mukti*? It is wrong to suppose that simple inactivity leads one to *mukti*.

D.: There are said to be *sadeha mukta* (liberated in body) and *videha mukta* (liberated without body).

M.: There is no liberation, and where are *muktas*?

D.: Do not Hindu sāstras speak of *mukti*?

M.: *Mukti* is synonymous with the Self. *Jivan mukti* (liberation while alive) and *videha mukti* (liberation after the body falls) are all for the ignorant. The *jnāni* is not conscious of *mukti* or *bandha* (bondage). Bondage, liberation and orders of *mukti* are all said for an *ajnāni* in order that ignorance might be shaken off. There is only *mukti* and nothing else.

D.: It is all right from the standpoint of Bhagavan. But what about us?

M.: The difference "He" and "I" are the obstacles to *jnāna*.

D.: But it cannot be denied that Bhagavan is of a high order whereas we are limited. Will Bhagavan make me one with Him?

M.: Were you aware of limitations in your sleep?

D.: I cannot bring down the state of my sleep in the present state and speak of it.

M.: You need not. These three states alternate before the unchanging Self. You can remember your state of sleep. That is your real state. There were no limitations then. After the rise of the 'I'-thought the limitations arose.

D.: How to attain the Self?

M.: Self is not to be attained because you are the Self.

D.: Yes. There is an unchanging Self and a changing one in me. There are two selves.

M.: The changefulness is mere thought. All thoughts arise after the arising of the 'I'-thought. See to whom the thoughts arise. Then you transcend them and they subside. That is to say, tracing the source of the 'I'-thought, you realise the perfect 'I'—'I'. 'I' is the name of the Self.

D.: Shall I meditate on "I am Brahman" (*Aham Brahmasmi*) ?

M.: The text is not meant for thinking "I am Brahman". *Aham* ('I') is known to every one. Brahma abides as *Aham* in every one. Find out the 'I'. The 'I' is already Brahman. You need not think so. Simply find out the 'I'.

D.: Is not discarding of the sheaths mentioned in the Sastras ?

M.: After the rise of the 'I'-thought there is the false identification of the 'I' with the body, the senses, the mind, etc. 'I' is wrongly associated with them and the true 'I' is lost sight of. In order to sift the pure 'I' from the contaminated 'I' this discarding is mentioned. But it does not mean exactly discarding of the non-self, but it means the finding of the real Self.

The real Self is the Infinite 'I'—'I', *i.e.* 'I' in perfection. It is eternal. It has no origin and no end. The other 'I' is born and also dies. It is impermanent. See to whom are the changing thoughts. They will be found to arise after the 'I'-thought. Hold the 'I'-thought. They subside. Trace back the source of the 'I'-thought. The Self alone will remain.

D.: It is difficult to follow. I understand the theory. But what is the practice ?

M.: The other methods are meant for those who cannot take to the investigation of the Self. Even to repeat *Aham Brahmasmi* or think of it, a doer is necessary. Who is it ? It is 'I'. *Be* that 'I'. It is the direct method. The other methods also will ultimately lead everyone to this method of the investigation of the Self.

D.: I am aware of the 'I'. Yet my troubles are not ended.

M.: This 'I'-thought is not pure. It is contaminated with the association of the body and senses. See to whom the trouble is. It is to the 'I'-thought. Hold it. Then the other thoughts vanish.

D.: Yes. How to do it? That is the whole trouble.

M.: Think 'I' 'I' 'I' and hold to that one thought to the exclusion of all others.

23rd October, 1936

267. While speaking of the animal companions in the hall Sri Bhagavan quoted a Tamil stanza by Auvai.

When the old lady was going along she heard on one occasion some one praising Kambar. She replied with a stanza which means:

"Each is great in its own way. What is Kambar's greatness when compared with a bird which builds its nest so fine, the worms which give lac, the honey-bee which builds the comb, the ants which build cities, and the spider its web?"

Bhagavan then began to describe their activities.

While living on the hill He had seen a hut built up of stones and mud and roofed with thatch. There was constant trouble with white ants. The roof was pulled down and the walls demolished to get rid of the mud which harboured the ants. Sri Bhagavan saw that the hollows protected by stones were made into towns. These were skirted by walls plastered black, and there were roads to neighbouring cities which were also similarly skirted with black plastered walls. The roads were indicated by these walls. The interior of the town contained holes in which ants used to live. The whole wall was thus tenanted by white ants which revaged the roofing materials above.

Sri Bhagavan had also watched a spider making its web and described it. It is seen in one place, then in another place, again in a third place. The fibre is fixed in all those points. The spider moves along it, descends, ascends and goes round and round and the web is finished. It is geometrical. The net is spread out in the morning and rolled up in the evening.

Similarly the wasps build their nests of lac (crude), and so on.

So then, each animal has got some remarkable instinct. Kambar's learning is not to be wondered at, because it is God's will, as it is in the other cases.

268. *Dr. Syed:* What is salvation? What did Christ mean by it?

M.: Salvation for whom? and from what?

D.: Salvation for the individual and from the sorrows and sufferings of the world.

M.: Whose are the sorrows, etc.?

D.: Of the mind.

M.: Are you the mind?

D.: I shall now explain how this question arose. I was meditating. I began to reflect on the Grace shown by Christ to some devotees who got salvation. I consider that Sri Bhagavan is similar. Is not salvation the result of similar Grace? That is what I mean by my questions.

M.: Yes. Right.

D.: The booklet "*Who am I?*" speaks of *swarupa drishti* (seeing the essence). Then there must be a seer and the seen. How can this be reconciled with the Ultimate Unity?

M.: Why do you ask for salvation, release from sorrow, etc? He who asks for them sees them also. The fact is this. *Drishti* (sight) is consciousness. It forms the subject and object. Can there be *drishti* apart from the Self? The Self is all—*drishti*, etc.

D.: How to discern the ego from the Perfect 'I'—'I'?

M.: That which rises and falls is the transient 'I'. That which has neither origin nor end is the permanent 'I'—'I' consciousness.

D.: Will continuous thought on the Self make the mind more and more refined so that it will not think of anything but the highest?

M.: There is the peaceful mind which is the supreme. When the same becomes restless, it is afflicted by thoughts. Mind is only the dynamic power (*śakti*) of the Self.

D.: Are the sheaths material and different from the Self?

M.: There is no difference between matter and spirit. Modern science admits that all matter is energy. Energy is power or force (*śakti*). Therefore all are resolved in Siva and Sakti *i.e.* the Self and the Mind.

The *koshas* are mere appearances. There is no reality in them as such.

D.: How many hours a day should one devote to meditation?

M.: Your very nature is meditation.

D.: It will be so when ripe, but not now.

M.: You become conscious of it later. That does not mean that your nature is now different from meditation.

D.: What about practice?

M.: Meditation must always be practised.

D.: A Persian mystic says: "There is nothing but God." The Quran says: "God is immanent in all."

M. : There is no "all", apart from God, for Him to pervade. He alone is.

D. : Is it morally right for a man to renounce his household duties when he once realises that his highest duty is *Ātma-chintana* (continuous thought on the Self) ?

M. : This desire to renounce things is the obstacle. The Self is simple renunciation. The Self has renounced all.

D. : It is true from Bhagavan's standpoint. But for us...... My work demands the best part of my time and energy ; often I am too tired to devote myself to *Atma-chintana*.

M. : The feeling "I work" is the hindrance. Enquire, "Who works ?" Remember, "Who am I ?" The work will not bind you. It will go on automatically. Make no effort either to work or to renounce work. Your effort is the bondage. What is bound to happen will happen.

If you are destined to cease working, work cannot be had even if you hunt for it. If you are destined to work you cannot leave it ; you will be forced to engage in it. So leave it to the Higher Power. You cannot renounce or hold as you choose.

269. *D.* : How is all-immanent God said to reside in *daharākāsa* (Ether of the Heart) ?

M. : Do we not reside in one place ? Do you not say that you are in your body ? Similarly, God is said to reside in *Hrtpundarika* (the heart-lotus). The Heart-Lotus is not a place. Some name is mentioned as the place of God because we think we are in the body. This kind of instruction is meant for those who can appreciate only relative knowledge.

Being immanent everywhere there is no particular place for God. Because we think we are in the body we also believe that we are born. However we do not think of the body, of God, or of method of realisation in our deep slumber. Yet in our waking state we hold on to the body and think we are in it.

The Supreme Being is that from which the body is born, in which it lives and into which it resolves. We however think that we reside within the body. Hence such instruction is given. The instruction means: "Look within."

270. Mr. G. V. Subbaramiah, a Lecturer in English in Nellore, asked: Brahman is the one by whom all this is pervaded (*yena sarvamidamthatham*). But then how does Sri Krishna specify the *vibhutis* in Chapter X of "*Bhagavad Gita*"?

M.: The specifications are in reply to a definite question by Arjuna who required to know the Lord's *vibhutis* for convenience of worship (*upāsana soukaryam*). The fact is that God is all. There is nothing apart from Him.

D.: The individual is said to give up decayed bodies (*jirnāni sarirāni*) and to take up new ones (*navāni*). Would the statement apply to infant deaths also?

M.: You do not know, in the first place, what is *jirnāni* and what is *navāni*. Secondly *jirna* and *nava* are relative terms. What is old to a king may be new to a beggar. The truth is that the individual signifies the state of embodiment till the time of liberation!

271. *Dr. Syed*: How is Grace to be obtained?

M.: Similar to obtaining the Self.

D.: Practically, how is it to be for us?

M.: By self-surrender.

D.: Grace was said to be the Self. Should I then surrender to my own Self?

M.: Yes. To the one from whom Grace is sought. God, Guru and Self are only different forms of the same.

D.: Please explain, so that I may understand.

M.: So long as you think you are the individual you believe in God. On worshipping God, God appears to you as Guru. On serving Guru He manifests as the Self. This is the rationale.

272. *D.:* There are widespread disasters spreading havoc in the world *e.g.*, famine and pestilence. What is the cause of this state of affairs?

M.: To whom does all this appear?

D.: That won't do. I see misery around.

M.: You were not aware of the world and its sufferings in your sleep; you are conscious of them in your wakeful state. Continue in that state in which you were not afflicted by these. That is to say, when you are not aware of the world, its sufferings do not affect you. When you remain as the Self, as in sleep, the world and its sufferings will not affect you. Therefore look within. Seek the Self! There will be an end of the world and its miseries.

D.: But that is selfishness.

M.: The world is not external. Because you identify yourself wrongly with the body you see the world outside, and its pain becomes apparent to you. But they are not real. Seek the reality and get rid of this unreal feeling.

D.: There are great men, public workers, who cannot solve the problem of the misery of the world.

M.: They are ego-centred and therefore their inability. If they remained in the Self they would be different.

D.: Why do not Mahatmas help?

M.: How do you know that they do not help? Public speeches, physical activity and material help are all out-weighed by the silence of Mahatmas. They accomplish more than others.

D.: What is to be done by us for ameliorating the condition of the world?

M.: If *you* remain free from pain, there will be no pain anywhere. The trouble now is due to your seeing the world externally and also thinking that there is pain there. But both the world and the pain are within you. If you look within there will be no pain.

D.: God is perfect. Why did He create the world imperfect? The work shares the nature of the author. But here it is not so.

M.: Who is it that raises the question?

D.: I—the individual.

M.: Are you apart from God that you ask this question?

So long as you consider yourself the body you see the world as external. The imperfection appears to you. God is perfection. His work also is perfection. But you see it as imperfection because of your wrong identification.

D.: Why did the Self manifest as this miserable world?

M.: In order that you might seek it. Your eyes cannot see themselves. Place a mirror before them and they see themselves. Similarly with the creation.

"See yourself first and then see the whole world as the Self."

D.: So it amounts to this—that I should always look within.

M.: Yes.

D.: Should I not see the world at all?

M.: You are not instructed to shut your eyes from the world. You are only to "see yourself first and then see the whole world as the Self". If you consider yourself as the body the world appears to be external. If you are the Self the world appears as Brahman.

273. *Dr. Syed asked :* I have been reading the "*Five Hymns*". I find that the hymns are addressed to Arunachala by you. You are an *advaitin.* How do you then address God as a separate Being ?

M. : The devotee, God and the Hymns are all the Self.

D. : But you are addressing God. You are specifying this Arunachala Hill as God.

M. : You can identify the Self with the body. Should not the devotee identify the Self with Arunachala ?

D. : If Arunachala be the Self why should it be specially picked out among so many other hills ? God is everywhere. Why do you specify Him as Arunachala ?

M. : What has attracted you from Allahabad to this place ? What has attracted all these people around ?

D. : Sri Bhagavan.

M. : How was I attracted here ? By Arunachala. The Power cannot be denied. Again Arunachala is within and not without. The Self is Arunachala.

D. : Several terms are used in the holy books—*Atman, Paramatman, Para,* etc. What is the gradation in them ?

M. : They mean the same to the user of the words. But they are understood differently by persons according to their development.

D. : But why do they use so many words to mean the same thing ?

M. : It is according to circumstances. They all mean the Self. *Para* means "not relative" or "beyond the relative," that is to say, the Absolute.

D. : Should I meditate on the right chest in order to meditate on the Heart ?

M. : The Heart is not physical. Meditation should not be on the right or the left. Meditation should be on the Self. Everyone knows "I am". Who is the 'I' ? It will be neither within nor without, neither on the right nor on the left. 'I am'—that is all.

The Heart is the centre from which everything springs. Because you see the world, the body and so on, it is said that there is a centre for these, which is called the Heart. When you are in the Heart, the Heart is known to be neither the centre nor the circumference. There is nothing else. Whose centre could it be ?

D. : May I take it that the Self and the non-Self are like substance and its shadow ?

M. : Substance and shadow are for the one who sees only the shadow and mistakes it for the substance and sees its shadow also. But there is neither substance nor shadow for the one who is aware only of the Reality.

D. : Buddha, when asked if there is the ego, was silent ; when asked if there is no ego, he was silent ; asked if there is God, he was silent ; asked if there is no God, he was silent. Silence was his answer for all these. *Mahayana* and *Hinayana* schools have both misinterpreted his silence because they say that he was an atheist.

If he was an atheist, why should he have spoken of Nirvana, of births and deaths, of karma, reincarnations and dharma ? His interpreters are wrong. Is it not so ?

M. : You are right.

27th October, 1936

274. The Muslim Professor asked how Vaishnavism can be reconciled to Advaitism.

M. : The Vaishnavites call themselves Visishtadvaitins. This is also Advaita. Just as the individual body comprises the soul, the ego and the gross body, so also God comprises Paramatma, the world and the individuals.

D. : Does not *bhakti* imply duality ?

M. : "*swa swarupānusandhānam bhaktirityabhidheeate*" (Reflection on one's own Self is called *bhakti*.)

Bhakti and Self-Enquiry are the same. The Self of the advaitins is the God of the *bhaktas.*

D. : Is there a spiritual hierarchy of all the original propounders of religions watching the spiritual welfare of the humans ?

M. : Let them be or let them not be. It is only a surmise at the best. Atma is *pratyaksha* (self-evident). Know it and be done with speculation. One may admit such a hierarchy ; another may not. But no one can gainsay the Atma.

D. : What does Sri Bhagavan think of *Pravritti* and *Nivritti* margas ?

M. : Yes. Both are mentioned. What of that ?

D. : Which is the better of the two ?

M. : If you see the Self—pure and simple—it is *nivritti* ; if you see the Self with the world, it is *pravritti.* In other words, inward-turned mind (*antarmukhi manas*) is *nivritti* ; outward-going mind (*bahirmukhi manas*) is *pravritti.* Anyway, there is nothing apart from the Self. Both are the same.

Similarly also, with the spiritual hierarchy ; they cannot exist apart from the Self. They are only in the Self and remain as the Self. Realisation of the Self is the one Goal of all.

5th November, 1936

275. In the course of conversation, someone referred to the fact that when Mr. Brunton and a lady were walking home in the night, they saw a bright glow on half the hill moving slowly and gently from North to South.

Sri Bhagavan said : This hill is said to be wisdom in visible shape.

D. : How is it visible to the physical eye ?

M. : Sambandar had sung " The One who fascinated my heart or the captivator of my heart, I sing of Him in my mind". The Heart is captivated; consequently the mind must have sunk into the Heart; and yet there is the remembrance which enables the saint to sing of God later.

Then the experience of a young disciple was mentioned. The young man, educated and in good circumstances, in good health and sober mind, was once facing Sri Bhagavan's picture in his home and meditating on the figure. The figure suddenly appeared animated with life, which threw the young man into a spasm of fear. He called out for his mother. His mother came and asked him what the matter was. He was surrounded by his relatives who were perplexed by his appearance. He was aware of their presence, but was still overpowered by a mysterious force which he tried to resist. He became unconscious for a short time. Fear seized him as he regained consciousness. The people became anxious and tried to bring him round with medicines.

When later he came to Tiruvannamalai he had some foreboding of similar experience. The proximity of Sri Bhagavan once prevented any untoward happening. But whenever he wandered away from the hall he found the force almost irresistible and himself in the grip of fear.

Sri Bhagavan said: "Is it so? No one told me this before."

A devotee asked, if it was not *saktipata* (descent of divine power)?

M.: Yes, it is. A mad man clings to his *samskāras*, whereas a *jnāni* does not. That is the only difference between the two. *Jnāna* is madness of a kind.

D.: But *saktipata* is said to occur in *karmasāmya* i.e. when merit and demerit are equal.

M.: Yes. *Malaparipāka*, *karmasāmya* and *saktipata* mean the same. A man is running the course of his *samskāras*; when taught that he is the Self, the teaching affects his mind and imagination runs riot. He feels helpless before the onrushing power. His experiences are only according to his imagination of the state "I am the Self," whatever he may conceive it to be. *Saktipata* alone confers the true and right experience.

When the man is ripe for receiving the instruction and his mind is about to sink into the Heart, the instruction imparted works in a flash and he realises the Self all right. Otherwise, there is always the struggle.

Mano-nāsa, jnāna, and *chittaikāgrta* (annihilation of the mind, knowledge and one-pointedness) mean the same.

276. The U.P. lady arrived with her brother, a woman companion and a burly bodyguard.

When she came into the hall she saluted Maharshi with great respect and feeling, and sat down on a wool blanket in front of Sri Bhagavan. Sri Bhagavan was then reading "*Trilinga*" in Telugu on the reincarnation of a boy. The boy is now thirteen years old and reading in the Government High School in a village near Lucknow. When he was three years he used to dig here and there; when asked, he would say that he was trying to recover something which he had hidden in the earth. When he was four years old, a marriage function was celebrated in his home. When leaving, the guests humorously remarked that they would return for this boy's marriage. But he turned round and said: "I am already married. I have two wives." When asked to point them out, he requested to be taken to a certain village, and there he pointed to two women as his wives. It is now learnt that a period of ten months elapsed between the death of their husband and the birth of this boy.

When this was mentioned to the lady, she asked if it was possible to know the after-death state of an individual.

Sri Bhagavan said, "Some are born immediately after, others after some lapse of time, a few are not reborn on this earth but eventually get salvation in some higher region, and a very few get absolved here and now."

She : I do not mean that. Is it possible to know the condition of an individual after his death ?

M. : It is possible. But why try to know it ? All facts are only as true as the seeker.

She : The birth of a person, his being and death are real to us.

M. : Because you have wrongly identified your own self with the body, you think of the other one in terms of the body. Neither you nor the other is the body.

She : But from my own level of understanding I consider myself and my son to be real.

M. : The birth of the 'I'-thought is one's own birth, its death is the person's death. After the 'I'-thought has arisen the wrong identity with the body arises. Thinking yourself the body, you give false values to others and identify them with bodies. Just as your body has been born, grows and will perish, so also you think the other was born, grew up and died. Did you think of your son before his birth ? The thought came after his birth and persists even after his death. In as much as you are thinking of him he is your son. Where has he gone ? He has gone to the source from which he sprang. He is one with you. So long as you are, he is there too. If you cease to identify yourself with the body, but see the real Self, this confusion will vanish. You are eternal. The others also will similarly be found to be eternal. Until this truth is realised there will always be this grief due to false values arising from wrong knowledge and wrong identity.

She : Let me have true knowledge by Sri Bhagavan's Grace.

M.: Get rid of the 'I'-thought. So long as "I" is alive, there is grief. When "I" ceases to exist, there is no grief. Consider the state of sleep!

She: Yes. But when I take to the 'I'-thought, other thoughts arise and disturb me.

M.: See whose thoughts they are. They will vanish. They have their root in the single 'I'-thought. Hold to it and they will disappear.

Again the Master pointed to the story of *Punya* and *Pāpa* in "*Yoga Vasishta*", V, Ch. 20, where *Punya* consoles *Pāpa* on the death of their parents and turns him to realising the Self. Further, creation is to be considered in its two aspects, *Isvara srishti* (God's creation) and *jiva srishti* (individual's creation). Of these two, the universe is the former; and its relation to the individual is the latter. It is the latter which gives rise to pain and pleasure, irrespective of the former. A story was mentioned from "*Panchadasi*". There were two young men in a village in South India. They went on a pilgrimage to North India. One of them died. The survivor, who was earning something, decided to return only after some months. In the meantime he came across a wandering pilgrim whom he asked to convey the information regarding himself and his dead companion to the village in South India. The wandering pilgrim did so, but by mistake changed the names. The result was that the dead man's parents rejoiced in his safety and the living one's parents were in grief. Thus, you see, pain or pleasure has no reference to facts but to mental conceptions. *Jiva srishti* is responsible for it. Kill the *jiva* and there is no pain or pleasure but the mental Bliss persists for ever. Killing the *jiva* is to abide in the Self.

She: I hear all this. It is beyond my grasp. I pray Sri Bhagavan to help me to understand it all.

"I had been to a waterfall in Mysore. The cascade was a fascinating sight. The waters streamed out in the shapes of fingers trying to grasp the rocks but were rushed on by the current to the depths below. I imagined this to be the state of the individuals clinging to their present surroundings. But I cannot help clinging.

"I cannot imagine that we are no better than seasonal flowers, fruits and leaves on trees. I love flowers but still this idea has no hold on me."

After a few minutes, she pointed out that she had intended to ask Maharshi about death and matters relating to it but did not however do it. Yet Maharshi was reading the related matter in the newspaper and the same topic came up for enlightenment. She left after seeing the cow Lakshmi.

9th November, 1936

277. *Mr. Cohen :* What is will ? I mean—where does it fit in, in the five *koshas ?*

M. : The 'I'-thought arises first and then all other thoughts. They comprise the mind. The mind is the object and the 'I' is the subject. Can there be will without the 'I'? It is comprised in the 'I'. The 'I'-thought is the *vijnānamaya kosa* (intellectual sheath). Will is included in it.

Again Sri Bhagavan said in connection with "*Upadesa Sara*" : *Annamaya kosha* is the gross body sheath. The senses with the *prāna* and the *karmendriyas* form the *prānamaya-kosha* (sense-sheath). The senses with the mind form the *manomaya kosha* (mind-sheath). They are the *jnanendrivas.* The Mind is formed of thoughts only. *Idam* (this) is the object and *aham* ('I') is the subject ; the two together form the *vijnanamaya-kosha* (intellect-sheath). (V. 21 of "Upadesa Sara").

10th November, 1936

278. Miss W. Umadevi, a Polish lady, convert to Hinduism, had travelled in Kashmir and brought views from Kashmir at which we were looking. Sri Bhagavan humorously remarked, "We have seen those places without the trouble of travel."

D.: I wish to go to Kailas.

M.: One can see these places only if destined. Not otherwise. After seeing all, there will still remain more —if not in this hemisphere, maybe in the other. Knowledge implies ignorance of what lies beyond what is known. Knowledge is always limited.

After some time Sri Bhagavan continued: Appar was decrepit and old and yet began to travel to Kailas. Another old man appeared on the way and tried to dissuade him from the attempt, saying that it was so difficult to reach there. Appar was however obdurate and said that he would risk his life in the attempt. The stranger asked him to dip himself in a tank close by. Appar did so and found Kailas then and there. Where did all this happen? In Tiruvayyar, nine miles from Tanjore. Where is Kailas then? Is it within the mind or outside it? If Tiruvayyar be truly Kailas, it must appear to others as well. But Appar alone found it so.

Similarly it is said of other places of pilgrimage in the South, that they are the abodes of Siva, and devotees found them so. This was true from their standpoint. Everything is within. There is nothing without.

279. *D.:* How long does it take a man to be reborn after death? Is it immediately after death or some time after?

M.: You do not know what you were before birth, yet you want to know what you will be after death. Do you know what you are now?

Birth and rebirth pertain to the body. You are identifying the Self with the body. It is a wrong identification. You believe that the body has been born and will die, and confound the phenomena relating to the one with the other. Know your real being and these questions will not arise.

Birth and rebirth are mentioned only to make you investigate the question and find out that there are neither births nor rebirths. They relate to the body and not to the Self. Know the Self and be not perturbed by doubts.

280. *D.* : Can you help me to get rid of *Māyā* ?

M. : What is *Māyā* ?

D. : Attachment to the world.

M. : Was the world in your deep sleep ? Was there attachment to it ?

D. : There was not.

M. : Were you there or not ?

D. : May be.

M. : Then do you deny having existed in sleep ?

D. : I do not.

M. : You are therefore now " the same one as there was in sleep."

D. : Yes.

M. :

Sleep	*Wakefulness*
No world	World
No attachment	Attachment
The Self	The Self

What is it then that raises the question of *Māyā* just now ?

D. : The mind was not in sleep. The World and the attachment to it are of the mind.

M.: That is it. The world and the attachment to it are of the mind and not of the Self.

D.: I was ignorant in sleep.

M.: Who says that he was ignorant? Is he not ignorant now? Is he a *jnāni*?

Ignorance is now mentioned by the contaminated Self here.

D.: Was the Self pure then in sleep?

M.: It did not raise any doubts. It did not feel imperfect or impure.

D.: Such Self is common to all, even in a dead body.

M.: But the man in sleep or in a dead body does not raise questions. Consider who raises questions. It is you. Were you not in sleep? Why was there no imperfection? The pure Self is simple Being. It does not associate itself with objects and become conscious as in the wakeful state. What you now call consciousness in the present state is associated consciousness requiring brain, mind, body, etc., to depend upon. But in sleep consciousness persisted without these.

D.: But I do not know the consciousness in sleep.

M.: Who is not aware of it? You admit "I am". You admit "I was" in sleep. The state of *being* is yourself.

D.: Do you mean to say that sleep is Self-Realisation?

M.: It is the Self. Why do you talk of Realisation? Is there a moment when the Self is not realised? If there be such a moment, the other moment might be said to be one of Realisation. There is no moment when the Self is not nor when the Self is not realised. Why pick out sleep for it? Even now you are Self-realised.

D.: But I do not understand.

M.: Because you are identifying the Self with the body. Give up the wrong identity and the Self is revealed.

D.: But this does not answer my question to help me to get rid of *Māyā, i.e.*, attachment.

M.: This attachment is not found in sleep. It is perceived and felt now. It is not your real nature. On whom is this accretion? If the Real Nature is known these exist not. If you realise the Self the possessions are not perceived. That is getting rid of *Māyā*. *Māyā* is not objective, that it could be got rid of in any other way.

15th November, 1936

SPARKS FROM THE ANVIL

281. A certain man, who claims to have been Sri Maharshi's quondam disciple, has filed a suit in the court praying for a declaration that he is the legitimate Sarvadhikari of the Asram.

Sri Maharshi was examined on Commission. There was a crowd but the proceedings went on smoothly in the room on the North East.

The following are a few tit-bits therefrom: Sri Bhagavan's answers were quite spontaneous and smooth.

Q.: To which Asramam does Sri Bhagavan belong?

M.: *Atiasrama* (beyond the four stages).

Q.: What is it?

M.: It is beyond the four commonly known Asramas.

Q.: Is it Shastraic?

M.: Yes. It is mentioned in the Shastras.

Q.: Are there others of the same type besides yourself?

M.: There may be.

Q.: Have there been any?

M.: Suka, Rishabha, Jada Bharata and others.

Q.: You left home at an early age because you had no attachment for home and property. But here, there is property in the Asramam. How is it?

M. : I do not seek it. Property is thrust on me. I neither love nor hate it.

Q. : Are they given to you ?

M. : They are given to the Swami, whoever he may be. But the body is considered the Swami in the world. That body is this. It reduces itself to myself.

Q. : In that case the attachment to property is now renewed. Is it so ?

M. : I do not hate it,—that is all I said.

Q. : In practical life it amounts to what I say.

M. : Just as we live and move in practical matters.

Q. : Do you give *upadesh* ? Have you ever done it ?

M. : Visitors ask questions. I answer them as well as I know. It is for them to treat my words as they please.

Q. : Is it *upadesh* ?

M. : How shall I say how others take it ?

Q. : Have you disciples ?

M. : I do not give *upadesh* in the ceremonial manner. For instance, keeping a *kumbha,* making *puja* to it and whispering to the person.

The person may call himself my disciple or devotee. I do not consider any one to be my disciple. I have never sought *upadesh* from any one nor do I give ceremonial *upadesh.* If the people call themselves my disciples I do not approve or disapprove. In my view all are alike. They consider themselves fit for being called disciples. What can I say to them ? I do not call myself a disciple or a Guru.

Q. : How did you approve the building of Skandasramam on the Hill which was temple-land, without previously obtaining permission from the authorities ?

M. : Guided by the same Power which made me come here and reside on the Hill.

Q. : When you threw away your cash, etc., within an hour after your arrival in this place, you did so because you did not desire possessions. You never touch money. There were no possessions for several years after your arrival here. How is it that donations are now accepted by the Asramam ?

M. : This practice grew up at a later stage because a few associates began to use my name to collect funds. I did not approve of their action nor check them. So it is going on. One man leaves, another steps in, but the process goes on. I do not desire that contributions should be accepted. But people do not heed that advice. I do not desire to give ineffective advice. I do not therefore check them. Since money comes in property grows spontaneously.

Q. : Why do you not sign your name ?

M. : The author of '*Self-Realisation*' has furnished his answer for this question. Moreover, by what name am I to be known ? I myself do not know. People have given me several names from time to time since my arrival here. If I should sign by one name, all would not understand it. So I used to say to the people seeking autographs that, even if they should show my signature, people in general would not believe it to be true.

Q. : You do not touch money nor other offerings, I trust.

M. : People sometimes place fruits in my hands. I touch them.

Q. : If you receive one kind of offering, why should you not receive money also ?

M. : I cannot eat money. What shall I do with it ? Why should I take that with which I do not know what to do ?

Q. : Why do visitors stop at the Asramam ?

M. : They must know why.

Q. : You have no objection to any one coming and staying here, I suppose.

M.: No.

Q.: You have similarly no objection to any length of their stay.

M.: No. If I do not find it agreeable I will go away. That is all.

A lawyer devotee asked Sri Bhagavan if the previous day's examination by Commission caused much strain.

M.: I did not use my mind and so there was no strain. Let them examine me for a thousand days. I don't mind.

16th November, 1936

282. *D.*: Does the *Tāntrik sādhana* bring about Self-Realisation ?

M.: Yes.

D.: Which worship in *Tantra* is the best ?

M.: It depends on temperament.

D.: What part does Kundalini play in bringing about Self-Realisation ?

M.: Kundalini rises from any *lakshya* that you have. Kundalini is *prāna-sakti* (life-current).

D.: Different deities are said to reside in different *chakras*. Does one see them in course of *sādhana* ?

M.: They can be seen if desired.

D.: Does the path to Self-Realisation go through Samādhi ?

M.: They are synonymous.

D.: It is said that the Guru can make his disciple realise the Self by transmitting some of his own power to him ? Is it true ?

M.: Yes. The Guru does not bring about Self-Realisation. He simply removes the obstacles to it. The Self is always realised.

D.: Is there absolute necessity of a Guru for Self-Realisation ?

M.: So long as you seek Self-Realisation the Guru is necessary. Guru is the Self. Take Guru to be the Real Self and your self as the individual self. The disappearance of this sense of duality is removal of ignorance. So long as duality persists in you the Guru is necessary. Because you identify yourself with the body you think the Guru, too, to be some body. You are not the body, nor is the Guru. You are the Self and so is the Guru. This knowledge is gained by what you call Self-Realisation.

D.: How can one know whether a particular individual is competent to be a Guru?

M.: By the peace of mind found in his presence and by the sense of respect you feel for him.

D.: If the Guru happens to turn out incompetent, what will be the fate of the disciple who has implicit faith in him?

M.: Each one according to his merits.

D.: What are your opinions about social reform?

M.: Self-reform automatically brings about social reform. Confine yourself to self-reform. Social reform will take care of itself.

D.: What is your opinion about Gandhiji's Harijan movement?

M.: Ask him.

D.: Is it necessary to take bath if we touch dead bodies?

M.: The body is a corpse. So long as one is in contact with it one must bathe in the waters of the Self.

D.: If the *advaita* is final, why did Madhvacharya teach *dvaita*?

M.: Is your Self *dvaita* or *advaita*? All systems agree on Self-surrender. Attain it first, then there will be time to judge whose view is right or otherwise.

D. : Why do you not preach to the people to set them on the right path ?

M. : You have already decided by yourself that I do not preach. Do you know who I am and what preaching is ?

D. : Is the shaving of widows among Brahmins not cruel ?

M. : This may be asked of Dharma Sastris or Reformers. Reform yourself first and let us then see about the rest.

17th November, 1936

283. *D.* : How can one become *jitasangadoshah* (free from the stain of association) ?

M. : By *satsanga* (association with the wise). " *Satsangatve nissangatvam, nissangatve nirmohatvam, nirmohatve nischalatatvam, nischalatatve jivanmuktih* "

Satsanga means *sanga* (= association) with *sat*. *Sat* is only the Self. Since the Self is not now understood to be *Sat*, the company of the sage who has thus understood it is sought. That is *Sat-sanga*. Introversion results. Then *Sat* is revealed. For whom is association ? For whom is *dosha* ?

D. : To the Self.

M. : No. The Self is pure and unaffected. The impurities affect only the ego.

D. : Can the soul remain without the body ?

M. : It will be so a short time hence—in deep slumber. The Self is bodiless. Even now it is so.

D. : Can a *sanyāsi* remain in the midst of *samsāra* ?

M. : So long as one thinks that he is a *sanyāsi*, he is not one. So long as one does not think of *samsāra*, he is not a *samsāri*; on the other hand he is a *sanyāsi*.

18th November, 1936

284. *D.:* It is said in *Srimad Bhagavad Gita:* "Realise the Self with pure intellect and also by service to Guru and by enquiry." How are they to be reconciled?

M.: "*Iswaro Gururatmeti*"—Iswara, Guru and Self are identical. So long as the sense of duality persists in you, you seek a Guru considering that he stands apart. He however teaches you the truth and you gain the insight.

D.: Kindly explain:

"*ahameko name kaschit nāhamanyasya kasyachit nāham pasyāmi yasyāham tam na pasyāmi yo mama*" (I am alone; no one is mine; of none else am I, I see none whose I am, none who is mine.)

M.: This sloka occurs in different scriptures holy books, e.g. *Bhagavata, Maha Bharata,* etc. It also forms the motto of Chapter XI in *Self-Realisation.*

Aham—'I' is only one. Egos are different. They are in the One Self. The Self is not affected by the egos. 'I' is one only. 'I' is the Truth. All that follows is meant to refute the sense of duality.

285. *D.:* If the Self be itself aware, why am I not aware of the same, even now?

M.: There is no duality. Your present knowledge is due to the ego, and only relative. Relative knowledge requires a subject and an object. Whereas the awareness of the Self is absolute and requires no object.

Remembrance also is similarly relative, requiring an object to be remembered and a subject to remember. When there is no duality, who is to remember whom?

D.: What happens to the created ego when the body dies?

M.: Ego is 'I'-thought. In its subtle form it remains a thought, whereas in its gross aspect it embraces the mind, the senses and the body. They disappear in deep slumber along with the ego. Still the Self is there ; similarly it will be in death.

Ego is not an entity independent of the Self in order that it might be created or destroyed by itself. It functions as an instrument of the Self and periodically ceases to function. That is to say, it appears and disappears; this might be considered to be birth and death.

Relative knowledge pertains to the mind and not to the Self. It is therefore illusory and not permanent. Take a scientist for instance. He formulates a theory that the Earth is round and goes on to prove it and establish it on an incontrovertible basis. When he falls asleep the whole idea vanishes ; his mind is left a blank ; what does it matter if the world remains round or flat when he is asleep ? So you see the futility of all such relative knowledge.

One should go beyond such relative knowledge and abide in the Self. Real knowledge is that experience and not apprehension by the mind.

D.: Why does not Sri Bhagavan go about and preach the Truth to the people at large ?

M.: How do you know that I am not doing it ? Does preaching consist in mounting a platform and haranguing to the people around ? Preaching is simple communication of knowledge. It may be done in Silence too.

What do you think of a man listening to a harangue for an hour and going away without being impressed by it so as to change his life ? Compare him with another who sits in a holy presence and leaves after some time with his outlook on life totally changed. Which is better : To preach loudly without effect or to sit silently sending forth intuitive forces to play on others ?

Again how does speech arise? There is abstract knowledge (unmanifest). From it there rises the ego which gives rise to thoughts and words successively. So then:

Abstract Knowledge
↓
Ego
↓
Thoughts
↓
Words

Words are therefore the great grandson of the original source. If words can produce an effect, how much more powerful should the preaching through silence be? Judge for yourself.

286. *D.:* Why can we not remain in *sushupti* as long as we like and be also voluntarily in it just as we are in the waking state?

M.: *Sushupti* continues in this state also. We are ever in *sushupti*. That should be consciously gone into and realised in this very state. There is no real going into or coming from it. Becoming aware of that is *samadhi*. An ignorant man cannot remain long in *sushupti* because he is forced by nature to emerge from it. His ego is not dead and it will rise up again and again. But the wise man attempts to crush it in its source. It rises up again and again for him too impelled by nature, i.e. *prārabdha*. That is, both in *jnāni* and *ajnāni*, ego is sprouting forth, but with this difference, namely, the *ajnāni's* ego when it rises up is quite ignorant of its source, or he is not aware of his *sushupti* in the dream and *jāgrat* states; whereas a *jnāni* when his ego rises up enjoys his transcendental experience with this ego keeping his *lakshya* (aim) always on its source. This ego is not dangerous; it is like the skeleton of a burnt rope; in this form it is ineffective. By constantly keeping our aim on our source our ego is dissolved in its source, like a doll of salt in the ocean.

D.: Sri Ramakrishna says that *nirvikalpa samādhi* cannot last longer than twenty-one days. If persisted in, the person dies. Is it so?

M.: When the *prārabdha* is exhausted the ego is completely dissolved without leaving any trace behind. This is final liberation. Unless *prārabdha* is completely exhausted the ego will be rising up in its *pure* form even in *jivanmuktas*. I still doubt the statement of the maximum duration of twenty-one days. It is said that people cannot live if they fast thirty or forty days. But there are those who have fasted longer, say a hundred days. It means that there is still *prārabdha* for them.

D.: How is realisation made possible?

M.: There is the absolute Self from which a spark proceeds as from fire. The spark is called the ego. In the case of an ignorant man it identifies itself with an object simultaneously with its rise. It cannot remain independent of such association with objects. This association is *ajnāna* or ignorance, whose destruction is the objective of our efforts. If its objectifying tendency is killed it remains pure, and also merges into the source. The wrong identification with the body is *dehātmabuddhi* ('I-am-the-body' idea). This must go before good results follow.

D.: How to eradicate it?

M.: We exist in *sushupti* without being associated with the body and mind. But in the other two states we are associated with them. If one with the body, how can we exist without the body in *sushupti?* We can separate ourselves from that which is external to us and not from that which is one with us. Hence the ego is not one with the body. This must be realised in the waking state. *Avasthatraya* (the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep) should be studied only for gaining this outlook.

The ego in its purity is experienced in intervals between two states or two thoughts. Ego is like that caterpillar which leaves its hold only after catching another. Its true nature can be found when it is out of contact with objects or thoughts. Realise this interval with the conviction gained by the study of *avasthatraya* (the three states of consciousness).

D.: How do we go to sleep and how do we wake up?

M.: Just at nightfall the hen clucks and the chicks go and hide themselves under her wings. The hen then goes to roost in the nest with the chicks in her protection. At dawn the chicks come out and so does the hen. The mother-hen stands for the ego which collects all the thoughts and goes to sleep. At sunrise the rays emerge forth and are collected again at sunset. Similarly, when the ego displays itself, it does so with all its paraphernalia. When it sinks, everything disappears with it.

D.: What does *sushupti* look like?

M.: In a cloudy dark night no individual identification of objects is possible and there is only dense darkness, although the seer has his eyes wide open; similarly in *sushupti* the seer is aware of simple nescience.

Sri Bhagavan is said to have remarked to an inquisitive person: "What is the meaning of this talk of truth and falsehood in the world which is itself false?"

27th November, 1936

287. A Punjabi gentleman, a doctor by profession, came here with his wife to visit Sri Bhagavan. He was in the hall when Sri Bhagavan came in after lunch; then he asked: "How should I meditate? I do not have peace of mind."

M.: Peace is our real nature. It need not be attained. Our thoughts must be obliterated.

D.: I have been trying to obliterate them but I am not successful.

M.: The *Gita* method is the only one for it. Whenever mind strays away bring it back to bear on meditation.

D.: I cannot bring my mind to meditate.

Another devotee: An elephant when free puts its trunk here and there and feels restless. If a length of chain is given to it, the trunk holds it and is no longer restless. Similarly, mind without an aim is restless, with an aim it remains at peace.

D.: No, no, it is all theory. I have read many books. But no use. It is practically impossible to make the mind concentrate.

M.: Concentration is impossible so long as there are predispositions. They obstruct *bhakti* also.

The interpreter advised the questioner to study "*Who am I?*". The doctor was ready with his protestations: "I have read it also. I cannot still make my mind concentrate."

M.: By practice and dispassion—"*ābhyāsa vairāgyābhyām*".

D.: *Vairāgyā* is necessary.......

M.: *Abhyāsa* and *vairāgya* are necessary. *Vairāgya* is the absence of diffused thoughts; *abhyāsa* is concentration on one thought only. The one is the positive and the other the negative aspect of meditation.

D.: I am not able to do so by myself. I am in search of a *force* to help me.

M.: Yes, what is called *Grace*. Individually we are incapable because the mind is weak. Grace is necessary. *Sādhu seva* is meant only for it. There is however nothing new to get. Just as a weak man comes under the control of a stronger one, the weak mind of a man comes under control easily in the presence of the strong-minded *sādhus*. That which is—is only Grace; there is nothing else.

The questioner said, "I request your blessings for the good of myself."

Bhagavan said, "Yes—yes."

He left with his wife.

29th November, 1936

288. Explaining *Māyā* of *Vedānta* and *swatantra* of *pratyābhijna* (independence of recognition), Sri Bhagavan said:

The Vedāntins say that *Māyā* is the *Sakti* of illusion premised in Siva. *Māyā* has no independent existence. Having brought out the illusion of the world as real, she continues to play upon the ignorance of the victims. When the reality of her *not being* is found, she disappears. 'Recognition' says that *Sakti* (power) is coeval with Siva. The one does not exist without the other. Siva is unmanifest, whereas *Sakti* is manifest on account of Her Independent Will (*swatantra*). Her manifestation is the display of the cosmos on pure consciousness, like images in a mirror. The images cannot remain in the absence of a mirror. So also the world cannot have an independent existence. *Swatantra* becomes eventually an attribute of the Supreme. Sri Sankara says that the Absolute is without attributes and that *Māyā* is what is *not* and has *no* real being. What is the difference between the two?

Both agree that the display is not real. The images of the mirror cannot in any way be real. The world does not exist in reality (*vastutah*). Both schools mean the same thing. Their ultimate aim is to realise the Absolute Consciousness. The unreality of the cosmos is implied in Recognition (*pratyābhijna*), whereas it is explicit in *Vedanta*. If the world be taken as *chit* (consciousness), it is always real. *Vedanta* says that there is no *nānā* (diversity), meaning that it is all the same Reality. There is agreement on all points except in words and the method of expression.

30th November, 1936

289. While discussing *Karma*, Sri Bhagavan said: "*Karma* has its fruit (*phala*). They are like cause and effect. The inter-relation of a cause and its effect is due to a *Sakti* whom we call God. God is *phala dātā* (dispenser of fruit).

A visitor had been speaking of the Self having forgotten its true nature. Sri Bhagavan after some time said: "People speak of memory and oblivion of the Fullness of the Self. Oblivion and memory are only thought-forms. They will alternate so long as there are thoughts. But Reality lies beyond these. Memory or oblivion must be dependent on something. That something must be foreign too; otherwise there cannot be oblivion. It is called 'I' by everyone. When one looks for it, it is not found because it is not real. Hence 'I' is synonymous with illusion or ignorance (*māyā*, *avidyā*, or *ajnāna*). To know that there never was ignorance is the goal of all the spiritual teachings. Ignorance must be of one who is aware. Awareness is *jnāna*. *Jnāna* is eternal and natural.. *Ajnāna* is unnatural and unreal.

D.: Having heard this truth, why does not one remain content?

M.: Because *samskāras* have not been destroyed. Unless the *samskāras* cease to exist, there will always be doubt and confusion (*sandeha, viparīta*). All efforts are directed to destroying doubt and confusion. To do so their roots must be cut. Their roots are the *samskāras*. These are rendered ineffective by practice as prescribed by the Guru. The Guru leaves it to the seeker to do this much so that he might himself find out that there is no ignorance. This truth mentioned is in the stage of the hearing of the Truth (*sravana*). That is not *drdha* (firm). For making it unshaken, one has to practise reflection (*manana*) and one-pointedness (*nididhyāsana*). These two processes scorch the seeds of *vāsanās* so that they are rendered ineffective.

Some extraordinary persons get *drdha jnāna* (unshaken knowledge) even on hearing the Truth only once (*sakrchhravana mātrena*). Because they are *krthopāsakāh* (advanced seekers), whereas the *akrthopāsakāh* (raw seekers) take longer to gain *drdha jnāna* (unshaken knowledge). People ask: "How did ignorance (*avidyā*) arise at all?" We have to say to them: "Ignorance never arose. It has no real being. That which is, is only *vidyā* (knowledge)."

D.: Why then do I not realise it?

M.: Because of the *samskāras*. However, find out who does not realise and what he does not realise. Then it will be clear that there is no *avidyā* (ignorance).

290. Mr. Sagarmull, a Marwari gentleman, a cotton merchant from Bombay, seems learned in *Srimad Bhagavad Gita*. He asked:

Srimad Bhagavad Gita says: "*mattah parataram nānyat kinchit*" and later on "*sutre maniganā iva*"—"there is nothing different from Me" and later on "like beads strung on a thread". If there is nothing but Sri

Krishna, how can the world be said to be like "beads on a string ?"

M.: It means that the *sutra* (string) and the *mani* (jewel beads) are not apart from ME. There are no *maniganāh* (rows of beads) apart from the string (*sutra*) and no string apart from Me. The *sloka* emphasises unity and not multiplicity which is only on the surface.

D.: Unity can only be after merging into Bhagavan. True—but till then there must be diversity. That is *samsāra*.

M.: Where are we now ? Are we apart from Bhagavan ? The *samsāra* and we are all in Bhagavan.

D.: But that is the experience of the *jnānis*. Differentiation persists until *jnāna* dawns. So there is *samsāra* for me.

M.: *Samskāra* (predisposition) is *samsāra* (cycle of births and deaths).

D.: Right. "All this is Vāsudeva"—this truth has been forgotten by us. So we cannot identify ourselves with God.

M.: Where is forgetfulness ?

D.: Like *svapna*.

M.: Whose *svapna* ?

D.: *Jiva's*.

M.: Who is *Jiva* ?

D.: It is Paramātma's.

M.: Let Paramātma ask then.

D.: I shall make my doubt clear by means of an illustration.

M.: Whoever wants the doubt to be illustrated and made clear ? Direct experience—*pratyaksha*—does not require examples for elucidation.

D.: There is *pratyaksha* and also forgetfulness.

M.: What is forgotten and by whom ?

D.: Listen. One dreams; the dream-world disappears on waking.

M.: Wake up similarly from the present dream.

D.: *Prakrti* (nature) is too powerful.

M.: See the *Purusha* (lord) also. What can *prakrti* do then?

D.: There is a *granthi* (knot) between them.

M.: Whose is that knot? Is it of the Lord or of Nature? or of both?

D.: Due to Brahman.

M.: Then Brahman must ask or must be asked. To whom is *svapna*? or the knot? You are always saying "I ask." Who is that 'I'?

D.: I do not perceive.

M.: 'I' is eternal. It would vanish if it were anything particular. It is Perfection. So it is not found as an object.

D.: But I am imperfect.

M.: Why bring in imperfection? Why are you not perfect? Did you feel imperfection in your sleep? Why do you not remain so even now? Bring sleep into the waking state (*jāgrat sushupti*) and you will be all right. "*Yā nisā sarva bhootānām* .... *pasyato muneh*...." (That which is night for the ignorant is day for the wise.)

D.: Yes, if he is a *muni* (sage).

M.: Who is a *muni*? Is he not a man?

D.: Do you not feel a slap if given to you? Is there no differentiation? Is it *jnāna*?

M.: A man under chloroform or under the influence of drink does not feel it. Is he a *jnāni*? Is *jnāna* inconsistent with that feeling?

D.: There is seer, seen and sight. They are not characteristic of *jnāna*.

M.: In sleep, in trance, in absent-mindedness, there is no differentiation. Do you call it *jnāna*? What has happened in these states? Is that which then was, absent now? That which *is* exists for ever. The difference is due to the mind. The mind is sometimes present and at other times absent. There is no change in the Reality. Reality is always Bliss—*Ānanda*.

D.: Bliss is the outcome of practice. What is that practice?

M.: *Sādhana* is the enquiry to find out to whom all these doubts arise.

D.: It is for the ego (*ahamkāra*).

M.: Wherefrom does *ahamkāra* arise?

D.: Guidance is necessary to show me the way.

M.: Go within and find the route. You cannot find it from without; nor should you seek it externally.

D.: I am unable to find the ego by search. I stop there.

M.: How can you get it? It is not apart from you. Leave alone not finding it. Where are you now? Do you mean to say "I am not"?

D.: What or how am I?

M.: Do not trouble yourself about it. Let it be as it is. Why do you care? Did you care for the whole or part (*samashti, vyashti*) in your sleep? The same person is present now too. You are the same in sleep and in waking.

D.: Sleep and waking are different states having different effects........

M.: How does it matter to you? The Self is the same, all through.

D.: The mind is not steady in meditation.

M.: Whenever it wanders, turn it inward again and again.

D.: When *duhkha* (misery) overpowers me, enquiry is impossible.

M.: Because the mind is too weak. Make it strong.

D.: By what means ?

M.: *Sat-sanga, Isvarārādhana, Pranāyāma*—(association with the wise, worship of God, breath control.)

D.: What happens ?

M.: Misery is removed; our aim is removal of misery. You do not acquire happiness. Your very nature is happiness. Bliss is not newly earned. All that is done is to remove unhappiness. These methods do it.

D.: Association with the wise may strengthen the mind. There must also be practice. What practice should be made ?

M.: Yes. Practice is necessary too. Practice means removal of predispositions. Practice is not for any fresh gain; it is to kill the predispositions.

D.: *Abhyāsa* (practice) should give me that power.

M.: Practice is power. If thoughts are reduced to a single thought the mind is said to have grown strong. When practice remains unshaken it becomes *sahaja* (natural).

D.: What is such practice ?

M.: Enquiring into the Self. That is all. "*ātmanyeva vasam nayet*"...... Fix the mind on the SELF.

D.: What is the aim to be kept in view ? Practice requires an aim.

M.: *Ātman* is the aim. What else can there be ? All other aims are for those who are incapable of *ātmalakshya* (having the Self for the aim). They lead you ultimately to *ātma-vichāra* (enquiry into the Self). One-pointedness is the fruit of all kinds of practice. One may get it quickly; another after a long time. Everything depends on the practice.

D.: Peace is extolled more than anything else. How shall we gain it ?

M.: It is your very nature. Forgetfulness never over-takes the Self. The Self is now confounded with non-self and that makes you speak of forgetfulness of the Self, Peace, etc. Oblivion will never rear up its head if this confusion is put an end to.

D.: How is that done?

M.: Enquiry into the Self. One-pointedness means cessation of mental activities. Forgetfulness must be for the self—well, of what?—of the Self? Are there then two selves? Practice removes the *samskāras*.

D.: But *samskāras* are infinite and eternal—from beginningless time.

M.: This itself is a *samskāra*. Give up that idea and all *samskāras* will disappear at once. That is *visrānti* (Repose), *sānti* (Peace). Peace is ever present. But you hold it down and rise over it and thus disturb it. Then you say, "I want Peace".

D.: Will Peace be gradual?

M.: Yes. "Make the mind gradually still" ("*Sanaissanaih uparamet*......") says the *Bhagavad Gita*.

After some time, the visitor asked if one Mr. G. had been here on or about the 20th instant. He himself had heard of Maharshi from him. Mr. G. was full of joy after his visit here.

M.: How can I know the names of all the visitors? He might have been here. All are full of joy. There is no name, no form........ Name is however needed for *vyavahāra* (empirical life).

5th December, 1936

SPARKS FROM THE ANVIL

291. *Question:* You spoke of *atyāshrama* (beyond the *āshramas*—beyond the orders of life) the other day. Is there any authority for it? Is it mentioned anywhere?

Maharshi: Yes—in the Upanishads, the *Suta Samhitā* (*Skānda Purāna*), *Bhāgavata*, *Bhārata* and other works.

Q.: Are there any restrictions or discipline for that state?

M.: There are characteristics of it mentioned.

Q.: There are Gurus for each *āshrama*. Is there a Guru for *atyāshrama?*

M.: Yes.

Q.: But you do not admit a Guru.

M.: There is a Guru for everyone. I admit a Guru for me also.

Q.: Who is your Guru.

M.: The Self.

Q.: For whom?

M.: For myself. The Guru may be internal or external. He may reveal Himself internally or communicate externally.

Q.: Can the *atyāshramis* own property?

NOTE: For *atyāshrama*, refer to *Nārada Pārivrājaka Upanishad*, the Sixth *Upadesa*, v. 9-15; *Svetāsvatara* Up. VI. 21; *Tejobindu* Up. I. 47-48; *Suta Samhitā-Mukti Khanda* Ch. V. v. 9, 14-43; *Sivamāhātmya Khanda* Ch. V. 32, 37, 55.

M.: There is no restriction for them. They may do what they please. *Suka* is said to have married and begotten children also.

Q.: The *atyāshrami* is like a householder in that case.

M.: I have already said that he is above the four recognized *āshramas*.

Q.: If they can marry, own property, etc., they are only *Grihasthas*.

M.: That may be your view.

Q.: Can they own property and convey the same to others ?

M.: They may or may not. All depends on their *prārabdha*.

Q.: Is there any *Karma* for them ?

M.: Their conduct is not regulated according to any rules or codes.

Q.: When visitors want to stay here, say two or three days, do they take your permission ?

M.: The permission from the management is permission from me. The visitors come here for me ; the management is for me. Wherever there is mutual agreement, I do not interfere. When visitors come here and I admit them, will others dare go against my wishes ? My consent is implied in the actions which take place with mutual goodwill.

Sri Bhagavan was shown a stanza in His own handwriting in praise of Himself as Subrahmanya.

Sri Bhagavan said that the handwriting was His own whereas the ideas were Perumālsvāmi's.

Q.: But do you not agree with the statement made in it ?

M.: In the same way as an idol is praised as Subrahmanya.

13th December, 1936

292. In reply to a question if *tanmātras* are the operating factors in dreams, Sri Bhagavan said : No. *Tanmātras* are *sukshma*—subtler than that. Although the dream-creations are subtle as compared with the gross world of the wakeful state, yet the dream-creations are gross compared to *tanmātras*. *Tanmātras* after "*panchikarana*" give rise to the different sets of operating causes. Influenced by *satva* they form the *antahkaranas* (inner organ, mind). There too, by the predominance of ether (*ākāsa*) it gives rise to *jnāna* (knowledge) whose seat is the brain.

"*vāyu*" (air) gives rise to *manas* (mind)
"*tejas*" (light) gives rise to *buddhi* (intellect)
"*jala*" (water) gives rise to *chitta* (memory etc.)
"*prthvī*" (earth) gives rise to *ahankāra* (ego).

They are "*samashti*" (collective) for the reason that they can operate collectively or individually with any or all of the senses or organs.

By *rajoguna* they are changed to *jnānendriyas* in the "*vyashti*" (individual) ; by *tamoguna* to *karmendriyas* in the "*vyashti*" (the individual). The relation between the external world and the individual now becomes easy because the *tanmātras* are common to them.

The *tanmātras* proceed from *Prakriti*. The statements on creation differ considerably. There is mentioned *yugapatsrshti* (simultaneous creation) and *kramasrshti* (gradual creation). The significance is not emphasis on creation but on the original source.

293. *Mr. K. K. V. Iyer :* There is no way found to go inward by means of meditation.

M. : Where else are we now ? Our very being is that.

Mr. Bose continued: "Being so, we are ignorant of it."

M.: Ignorant of what, and whose is the ignorance? If ignorant of the Self, are there two selves?

D.: There are no two selves. The feeling of limitation cannot be denied. Due to limitations.......

M.: Limitation is only in the mind. Did you feel it in deep sleep. You exist in sleep. You do not deny your existence then. The same Self is now and here, in the wakeful state. You are now saying that there are limitations. What has happened now that there are these differences between the two states. The differences are due to the mind. There was no mind in sleep, whereas it is now active. The Self exists in the absence of the mind also.

D.: Although it is understood, it is not realised.

M.: It will be by and by, with meditation.

D.: Meditation is with mind and how can it kill the mind in order to reveal the Self?

M.: Meditation is sticking to one thought. That single thought keeps away other thoughts; distraction of mind is a sign of its weakness. By constant meditation it gains strength, *i.e.* to say, its weakness of fugitive thought gives place to the enduring background free from thoughts. This expanse devoid of thought is the Self. Mind in purity is the Self. Sri Bhagavan continued in reply to the former questioner: Every one says "I am the body". It is the experience of the sage as also of the ignorant. The ignorant man believes that the Self is confined to the body only, whereas the wise man believes that the body cannot remain apart from the Self. The Self is infinite for him and includes the body also.

Mr. Bose said that he felt peace in His presence which lasts some time after. He added: "Why is it not enduring?"

M.: That Peace is the Real nature. Contrary ideas are only superimpositions. This is true *bhakti*, true *yoga*, true *jnāna*. You may say that this peace is acquired by practice. The wrong notions are given up by practice. That is all. Your true nature always persists. These flashes are only signs of the ensuing Revelation of the Self.

In reply to the first questioner Bhagavan said: The Heart is the Self. It is not within or without. The mind is Its *Sakti*. After the emergence of the mind, the universe appears and the body is seen to be contained in it. Whereas all these are contained in the Self and they cannot exist apart from the Self.

14th December, 1936

294. *Mr. Parkhi*: How is meditation to be practised?

M.: Meditation is, truly speaking, *Atmanishtha* (to be fixed as the self). But when thoughts cross the mind and an effort is made to eliminate them the effort is usually termed meditation. *Atmanishtha* is your real nature. Remain as you are. That is the aim.

D.: But thoughts come up. Is your effort meant to eliminate thoughts only?

M.: Yes. Meditation being on a single thought, the other thoughts are kept away. Meditation is only negative in as much as thoughts are kept away.

D.: It is said "*Ātma samstham manah krtvā*" (fixing the mind in the Self). But the Self is unthinkable.

M.: Why do you wish to meditate at all? Because you wish to do so you are told "*Ātma samstham manah krtva*" (fixing the mind in the Self); why do you not remain as you are without meditating? What is that "*manah*" (mind)? When all thoughts are eliminated it becomes "*Ātma samstha*" (fixed in the Self).

D.: If a form is given I can meditate on it and other thoughts are eliminated. But the Self is formless.

M.: Meditation on forms or concrete objects is said to be *dhyāna,* whereas the enquiry into the Self is *vichāra* (enquiry), or *nididhyāsana.*

Explaining "*adhyāropāpavādābhyām*" (superimposition and its elimination), Sri Bhagavan pointed that the first turns you inward to the Self; and then according to the second, you know that the world is not apart from the Self.

16th December, 1936

295. Mr. Naterlal Parekh, a Gujerati gentleman who had attended the International Religious Conference as a delegate from Baroda, came here on a visit. He is a young man, well-groomed, alert, and quite conscious of his well-earned merit. He presented a note containing some questions to Sri Bhagavan.

D.: Pray help me realise *Atma—Paramātma—Satchidānanda.*

M.: *Ātma—Paramātma—Satchidānanda* mean one and the same thing, *i.e.* the Self. The Self is eternally realised. Otherwise there will be no pleasure in it. If it is not eternal it must have a beginning; what begins will also end; so that it is only transient. There is no use seeking for a temporary state of affairs. The fact is that it is the state of effortless, alert Peace. Effortlessness while remaining aware is the state of Bliss, and that is Realisation.

D.: I do not want intellectual answers. I want them to be practical.

M.: Yes. Direct knowledge does not require intellectual discourses. Since the Self is directly experienced by everyone, they are not at all necessary. Everyone says "I am". Is there anything more to realise?

D.: It is not clear to me.

M.: You exist. You say 'I am'. That means existence.

D.: But I am not sure of it, *i.e.* my existence.

M.: Oh! Who then is speaking now?

D.: I, surely. But whether I exist or not, I am not sure. Moreover, admitting my existence leads me nowhere.

M.: There must be one even to deny the existence. If you do not exist, there is no questioner, and no question can arise.

D.: Let us take it that I exist.

M.: How do you know that you exist?

D.: Because I think, I feel, I see, etc.

M.: So you mean that your existence is inferred from these. Furthermore, there is no feeling, thinking, etc., in sleep and yet there is the being.

D.: But no. I cannot say that I was in deep sleep.

M.: Do you deny your existence in sleep?

D.: I may be or may not be in sleep. God knows.

M.: When you wake up from sleep, you remember what you did before falling asleep.

D.: I can say that I was before and after sleep, but I cannot say if I was in sleep.

M.: Do you now say that you were asleep?

D.: Yes.

M.: How do you know unless you remember the state of sleep?

D.: It does not follow that I existed in sleep. Admission of such existence leads nowhere.

M.: Do you mean to say that a man dies every time that sleep overtakes him and that he resuscitates while waking?

D.: May be. God alone knows.

M.: Let God come and find the solution for these riddles, then. If one were to die in sleep, one will be afraid of sleep, just as one fears death. On the other hand one courts sleep. Why should sleep be courted unless there is pleasure in it ?

D.: There is no positive pleasure in sleep. Sleep is courted only to be rid of physical fatigue.

M.: Well, that is right. "To be free from fatigue". There is one who is free from fatigue.

D.: Yes.

M.: So you are in sleep and you are now too. You were happy in sleep without feeling, thinking, etc. The same one continuing now, why are you not happy ?

D.: How can it be said that there is happiness ?

M.: Everyone says "*Sukhamahamasvāpsam*" (I slept happily or was blissfully asleep).

D.: I do not think that they are right. There is no "*sukha*" (bliss). It is only absence of sorrow.

M.: Your very being is bliss. Therefore everyone says I was blissfully asleep. That means that one remains in the primal uncontaminated state in sleep. As for sorrow, there is no sorrow. Where is it in order that you might speak of its absence in sleep. The present wrong identification of the Self with the body has given rise to all mistakes.

D.: What I want is realisation. I do not feel my inherent happy nature.

M.: Because the Self is now identified with the non-self. The non-self too is not apart from the Self. However, there is the wrong notion that the body is apart and the Self is confounded with the body. This wrong identity must be ended for happiness to manifest.

D.: I am unable to help myself.

The Engineer suggested surrender to the master.

D.: Agreed.

M.: Your nature is happiness. You say that is not apparent. See what obstructs you from your true being. It is pointed out to you that the obstruction is the wrong identity. Eliminate the error. The patient must himself take the medicine prescribed by the doctor in order that he may be cured of his illness.

D.: The patient is too weak to help himself and places himself unconditionally in the hands of the doctor.

M.: The doctor must be given a free hand and the patient must only remain quiet without saying anything. Similarly keep quiet. That is effortlessness.

D.: That is the most effective medicine too.

The other questions which he wrote down were:

D.: Convince me of the existence of God.

M.: Realisation of the Self amounts to such conviction.

D.: How is *prārabdha* (past *karma*) related to *purushakāra* (one's own effort here)?

M.: *Prārabdha* is *karma* (action). There must be a *kartā* (doer) for it. See who the *kartā* is. *Purushakāra* is effort. See who exerts. There is identity established. The one who seeks to know their relation is himself the link.

D.: What is *karma* and rebirth?

M.: See the *kartā* (doer) and then *karma* (action) becomes obvious. If you are born now, rebirth may follow. See if you are born now.

D.: Help me to have *jyotidarsana* (vision of light).

M.: *Darsana* (sight) implies *drashtā* (seer). Find him, and *darsana* (sight) is included in him.

296. Poovan, a shepherd, says that he knows Sri Bhagavan since thirty years ago, the days of Virupakshi cave. He used at times to supply milk to the visitors in those days.

Some six years ago he lost a sheep, which he was searching for three days. The sheep was pregnant and he had lost all hopes of recovering her, because he thought that she had been set upon by wild animals. He was one day passing by the Asramam, when Sri Bhagavan saw him and enquired how he was. The man replied that he was looking out for a lost sheep. Sri Bhagavan kept quiet, as is usual with Him. Then He told the shepherd to help in lifting some stones, which he did with great pleasure. After the work was finished, Sri Bhagavan told him: "Go this way," pointing the footpath towards the town. "You will find the stray sheep on the way." So he did and found the lost sheep with two little kids.

He now says, "What a Bhagavan is this! Look at the force of his words! He is great! He never forgets even a poor man like me. He remembers my son Manikkam also with kindness. Such are the great ones! I am happy when I do any little work for Him, such as looking to the cows when they are in heat."

18th December, 1936

297. *Mr. Cohen asked:* Meditation is with mind in the *jāgrat* (waking) state. There is mind in dream also. Why is there no meditation in dream? Nor is it possible.

M.: Ask it in the dream.

After a short silence Sri Bhagavan continued: You are told to meditate now and find who you are. Instead of doing it you ask "Why is there no meditation in dream or in sleep?" If you find out for whom there is *jāgrat* (waking), it will be clear that dream and sleep are also for the same one. You are the witness of *jāgrat* (waking), *svapna* (dream) and *sushupti* (sleep)—rather, they pass before you. Because you are out of meditation now, these questions arise. Stick to meditation and see if these questions arise.

23rd December, 1936

298. A certain visitor formulated a question, saying that meditation is more direct than investigation, because the former holds on to the truth whereas the latter sifts the truth from untruth.

M.: For the beginner meditation on a form is more easy and agreeable. Practice of it leads to *Ātmavichāra* which consists in sifting the Reality from unreality.

What is the use of holding on to truth when you are filled with antagonistic factors?

Ātmavichāra directly leads to realisation by removing the obstacles which make you think that the Self is not already realised.

24th December, 1936

299. Mr. T. K. S. Iyer asked Sri Bhagavan about the source of sound.

M.: The general opinion is that *parā* (sound) comes from the *Mulādhāra* (the solar plexus) at the bottom of the spine. All sounds beginning from *vaikharī* (thought form) are contained in *parā* which proceeds from *Kundalini*; and *Kundalini* is not different from the Heart. In fact the whole "*Shadādhāra*" (six-fold centre) is contained in the heart.

The *sushumnā* with its source *Kundalini* is included in the Heart.

A visitor asked about "*antarena tāluke sendrayonih*".

M.: *Indra yoni* together with the *sushumnā nādi* is contained (*leena*) in *parā*.

25th December, 1936

300. A Brahmachari youth who has graduated in science has been waiting here for Grace for the last four or five months in order that some job might drop on him

like a ripe apple from the tree. He has been making no other efforts to secure a job. His brother yesterday came here to take him away to his parents. But the youth declined to go. An appeal was made to Sri Bhagavan.

Sri Bhagavan said: "I do not tell anyone to come nor ask him to go. Everyone pleases himself here. He says he finds peace in the hall and he also wants a job. Evidently the job must be found in the hall itself so that his peace may not be disturbed. Peace is not in the hall. It is in the repose of the Self. It can be gained anywhere."

Some days later the youth threw away his sacred thread and appeared before Sri Bhagavan with his limbs shaking, which the young man later described as his Bliss (*ānanda*). Sri Bhagavan told him not to make a habit of sitting in front of Him in the hall and ordered him out. Furthermore He continued: Even a fledgeling is protected by the parent birds only till such time it grows its wings. It is not protected for ever. Similarly with devotees. I have shown the way. You must now be able to follow it up and find peace wherever you are.

The young man thinks that Sri Bhagavan gave him *Upadesh* in the following words: "The Self (*i.e.* ego) must be subdued by oneself."

The man however has refused the offer of a job to him in one of the local schools and thinks that he has been given a mighty job by the Hill or by Sri Bhagavan. "What that job is the world will know later," he says. He had further anticipated all this day's occurrences some months ago and had foretold them to his mother and to his friends. He is further happy at the happenings.

Sri Bhagavan however compared him to another man who is in no way of the right type. And yet the boy thinks that he is Bhagavan in embryo. Later he turned mad and died.

301. A gentleman enthusiastically recounted several of his experiences on following Sri Bhagavan's instructions and incidentally mentioned that he and Sri Bhagavan were born on the same day of the week and bore the same name........

Sri Bhagavan completed it, adding, "The same Self is in both."

302. A young man from Trichy asked Sri Bhagavan on the mention in "*Upadesa Manjari*" of *adhyanta vairāgyam* (total dispassion) as the qualification of a ripe disciple. He continued: "What is *vairāgya?* Detachment from worldly pursuits and desire for salvation. Is it not so?"

M.: Who has not got it?

Each one seeks happiness but is misled into thinking pain-associated pleasures as happiness. Such happiness is transient. His mistaken activity gives him short-lived pleasure. Pain and pleasure alternate with one another in the world. To discriminate between the pain-producing and pleasure-producing matters and to confine oneself to the happiness-producing pursuit only is *vairāgya.* What is it that will not be followed by pain? He seeks it and engages in it. Otherwise, the man has one foot in the world and another foot in the spiritual pursuit (without progressing satisfactorily in either field).

A question was again raised regarding the function of the Guru.

M.: Because the man is not able to help himself, finding himself too weak, he seeks more strength in the shape of a Guru.

303. Mr. K. R. V. Iyer sought more light on *nāda* (sound).

M.: He who meditates on it feels it. There are ten kinds of *nādas.* After the final thundering *nāda* the man gets *laya.* That is his natural and eternal state. *Nāda,* *jyoti*, or enquiry thus take one to the same point. (The former are indirect and the last is direct).

D.: The mind becomes peaceful for a short while and again emerges forth. What is to be done?

M.: The peace often gained must be remembered at other times. That peace is your natural and permanent state. By continuous practice it will become natural. That is called the "current". That is your true nature.

Nāda, photisms, etc., imply the existence of *triputi* (the triads of cogniser, cognition and the cognised). The current resulting from investigation for the Self is *śuddha triputi* or pure *triad*,—that is to say, undifferentiated triad.

26th December, 1936

304. A Swiss lady described a photism to Sri Bhagavan. While she was sitting with her eyes wide open she saw Sri Bhagavan's face becoming cherub-like and draped in glorious flowers. She was drawn in love towards that child-like face.

M.: The vision is in your mind. Your love is the cause. P. B. saw me as a giant figure; you saw me like a child. Both are visions.

(The lady said: P. B. asked me if I had any spiritual experience here, and I denied it. Now this happens.)

M.: Do not be deceived by visions.

D.: If one is miles away in Europe and invokes your aid........

M.: Where is Europe? It is in you.

D.: I have come here; I would like Maharshi to come there. (Saying it, she laughed gently. Silence for some minutes.)

M.: You see the physical body and so you find limitations. Time and space operate on this plane. So long as you think of the gross body there will be differences found as different bodies. On the other hand, knowledge of the real Maharshi will set all doubts at rest.

Are you in India now? Or is India in you? Even now this notion that you are in India must go. India is in you. In order to verify it, look to your sleep. Did you feel that you were in Europe or in India while asleep? You were nevertheless existing then the same as now.

Space is in you. The physical body is in space, but not you.

P. B. had his eyes closed when he saw the vision, whereas you had your eyes open, you say.

D.: Yes. But I have never had visions; whereas he is a psychic.

After a few minutes she asked if it is an advantage or a disadvantage to see visions like this.

M.: It is an advantage.

Sri Bhagavan continued: Probably you had been thinking of a child and that appeared in the vision......

D.: Yes, only of Siva—of His child-like face......

M.: That's it.

D.: But Siva is the Destroyer......(meaning, not a child).

M.: Yes—of sorrows.

After a few minutes Bhagavan continued: You will shortly go to sleep. When you wake up in the morning you will say "I slept well and happily". What happened in sleep is your real nature. That continues now too; otherwise it will not be your real nature. Get the state of sleep even now; it is Siva.

Have we got a form? Find that out before you think of Siva's form. Did you not exist in sleep? Were you aware of any form then? Were you with form in your sleep? You existed all the same. The 'I' which was in sleep is also now present. You were not the body according to your sleep-experience. You are the same now—that is without the body. Being without the body you were happy too in sleep. You are the same now too. That which is enduring must alone be the real nature. There was no body but only experience of happiness in sleep. That endures now too. The Self is bodiless. If you are thus without body how can Siva be with body? If you are with body Siva also is with body. If you are not, He also is not.

D.: Why is He then Siva?

M.: Siva means embodiment of happiness—of auspiciousness.

She was very pleased. After a time she left.

305. The visitors were talking among themselves and one of them said: "We, though familiar with our traditional teachings, are unable to follow these teachings (meaning Sri Bhagavan's). How can the foreigners unfamiliar with our ways follow Sri Bhagavan's teachings so easily?"

He seemed to sympathise with their attempts to understand us in spite of their handicaps, and also to pity them for want of proper equipment.

Sri Bhagavan remarked finally: Visions are better than no visions. They get interested in that way. They do not take to foreign ideas; when once they do it, they stick on. So much for their merits.

Sri Bhagavan later referred to Sivaprakasam Pillai's vision. "Visions are not external. They appear only internally. If external they must assert themselves without there being a seer. In that case what is the warranty for their existence? The seer only."

306. *D.*: There is something concrete necessary to meditate upon. How shall we meditate upon 'I'?

M.: We have become rooted in forms and so we require a concrete form for meditating upon. Only that which we contemplate will in the end remain over. When you contemplate the other thoughts disappear. So long as you need to contemplate there are other thoughts. Where are you? You contemplate because you exist. For the contemplator must contemplate. The contemplation can only be where he is. Contemplation wards off all other thoughts. You should merge yourself in the source. At times we merge in the source unconsciously, as in sleep, death, swoon, etc. What is contemplation? It is merging into the source *consciously*. Then the fear of death, of swoon, etc. will disappear, because you are able to merge into the source *consciously*.

Why fear death? Death cannot mean non-being. Why do you love sleep, but not death? Do you not think now? Are you not existing now? Did you not exist in your sleep? Even a child says that it slept well and happily. 'It admits its existence in sleep, unconsciously though. So, consciousness is our true nature. We cannot remain unconscious. We however say that we were unconscious in our sleep because we refer to qualified consciousness. The world, the body, etc. are so imbedded in us that this relative consciousness is taken to be the Self. Does any one say in his sleep that he is unconscious? He says so now. This is the state of relative consciousness. Therefore he speaks of relative consciousness and not of abstract consciousness. The true consciousness is beyond relative consciousness or unconsciousness.

Again reverting to "*Tiruvāchagam,*" Sri Bhagavan said: "All the four foremost Saints have given out their experiences in the very first stanza. (1) Undifferentiated worship. (2) Never-failing remembrance.

(3) Unrisen thought. (4) The ego is not, the Self is. All mean the same.

D.: But this truth is not realised.

M.: It will be realised in due course. Till then, there is devotion (*bhakti*) : "Even for a trice you do not leave my mind." Does He leave you any moment? It is you who allow your mind to wander away. He remains always steady. When your mind is fixed, you say : "*He* does not leave my mind even for a trice". How ridiculous!

27th December, 1936

307. Mr. Shamanna from Mysore asked Sri Bhagavan : Kindly explain *Aham Sphurana* (the light of "I"—"I").

M.: 'I' is not known in sleep. On waking 'I' is perceived associated with the body, the world and non-self in general. Such associated 'I' is "*Aham Vritti*". When *Aham* represents the Self only it is *Aham Sphurana*. This is natural to the *jnāni* and is itself called *jnāna* by *jnānis*, or *bhakti* by *bhaktas*. Though remaining in sleep it is not perceived. It cannot be known in sleep all at once. It must first be realised in the waking state, for it is our true nature underlying all the three states. Efforts must be made only in the *jāgrat* state and the Self realised here and now. It will afterwards be understood and realised to be the continuous Self, uninterrupted by *jāgrat, svapna* and *sushupti*. Thus it is *Akhandākāra vritti* (unbroken experience). "*Vritti*" is used for lack of a better expression. It should not be understood to be literally a *vritti*. In that case, *vritti* will resemble an 'ocean-like river,' which is absurd. *Vritti* is of short duration; it is qualified, directed consciousness; or absolute consciousness broken up by cognition of thoughts, senses, etc. *Vritti* is the function of the mind, whereas the continuous consciousness transcends the mind. This is the natural, primal state of the *jnāni* or the liberated being. That is unbroken experience. It asserts itself when relative consciousness subsides. *Aham vritti* ('I'-thought) is broken, *Aham sphurana* (the light of 'I'—'I') is unbroken, continuous. After the thoughts subside, the light shines forth.

31st December, 1936

308. A question was asked regarding untouchability.

Sri Bhagavan said: The Non-self is untouchable. The social untouchability is man-made, whereas the other untouchability is natural and divine.

D.: Should the untouchables be allowed into our temples?

M.: There are others to decide it.

A question was asked regarding the *avatārs* of Vishnu.

M.: Let us first know our own *avatāra*; the knowledge of the other *avatāras* will follow.

Again there was a question on *Isvara.*

M.: Existence of *Isvara* follows from our conception of *Isvara.* Let us first know whose concept He is. The concept will be only according to the one who conceives. Find out who you are and the other problem will solve itself.

1st January, 1937

309. *D.:* What is the difference between "*Aham Brahmāsmi*" (I am Brahman) and "*Brahmaivāham*" (only Brahma I am).

M.: The former is "*Pratyaksha vritti*" (direct experience), whereas the latter is "*Paroksha jnāna*" (indirect knowledge). The first begins with the realisation of "*Aham*" ('I'), whereas the latter starts with the hearsay Brahman which cannot be apart from the Self, if the same has been realised.

310. *Mr. Greenlees:* After leaving this Ashram in October I was aware of Bhagavan's peace enfolding me for about ten days. All the time while busy in work there was an undercurrent of that peace of unity; it was almost like the dual consciousness while half asleep in a dull lecture. Then it faded out entirely, and the old stupidities came in instead.

Work leaves no time for separate meditation. Is the constant reminder "I am", trying to feel it while actually at work, enough?

M.: It will become constant when the mind becomes strengthened. Repeated practice strengthens the mind; and such mind is capable of holding on to the current. In that case, engagement in work or no engagement, the current remains unaffected and uninterrupted.

D.: No separate meditation is necessary?

M.: Meditation is your true nature now. You call it meditation, because there are other thoughts distracting you. When these thoughts are dispelled, you remain as alone, *i.e.* in the state of meditation free from thoughts; and that is your real nature which you are now attempting to gain by keeping away other thougths. Such keeping away of other thoughts is now called meditation. When the practice becomes firm, the real nature shows itself as the true meditation.

Other thoughts arise more forcibly when you attempt meditation.

There was immediately a chorus of questions by a few others.

Sri Maharshi continued: Yes, all kinds of thoughts arise in meditation. It is but right. What lies hidden in you is brought out. Unless they rise up how can they be destroyed ? They therefore rise up spontaneously in order to be extinguished in due course, thus to strengthen the mind.

A visitor : All are said to be Brahman.

M. : Yes, they are. But so long as you think that they are apart they are to be avoided. If on the other hand they are found to be the Self there is no need to say 'all'. For all that exists is only Brahman. There is nothing besides Brahman.

D. : "*Ribhu Gita*" speaks of so many objects as unreal, adding at the end that they are all Brahman and thus real.

M. : Yes. When you see them as so many they are *asat, i.e.* unreal. Whereas when you see them as Brahman they are real, deriving their Reality from their substratum, Brahman.

D. : Why then does "*Upadesa Sara*" speak of the body, etc., as *jada i.e.* insentient ?

M. : In as much as you say that they are body, etc., apart from the Self. But when the Self is found this body, etc., are also found to be in it. Afterwards no one will ask the question and no one will say that they are insentient.

D. : *Viveka* is said to be discrimination between the Self and the non-self. What is the non-self ?

M. : There is no non-self, in fact. The non-self also exists in the Self. It is the Self which speaks of the non-self because it has forgotten itself. Having lost hold of itself, it conceives something as non-self, which is after all nothing but itself.

Then the discussion between the protagonists of various theories became warm.

2nd January, 1937

311. The 'I' which rises will also subside. That is the individual 'I' or the 'I'—concept. That which does not rise will not subside. It *is* and will be for ever. That is the universal 'I', the perfect 'I', or realisation of the Self.

At 5-30 p.m. the Swiss lady complains to Sri Bhagavan that she gets a headache if meditation be prolonged for some time.

M.: If the meditator and meditation be understood to be the same there will be no headache or similar complaints.

D.: But they are different. How shall we consider them to be the same?

M.: That is due to your outlook. There is only one and there are no differences. On meditation the relative consciousness will vanish. That is not annihilation; for Absolute Consciousness arises. The Bible itself says, "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you"....If you consider yourself to be the body there is some difficulty in understanding the statement. On the other hand, if you know who you really are, the Kingdom of Heaven and all are included in your true Self. They are concepts arising after the ego has arisen. (*Drishtim jnānamayeem krtva pasyet Brahmamayam jagat.*) Direct your look within and make it absolute. With that absolute awareness realised, look without and you will realise the universe to be not apart from the realised Absolute.

Because your outlook is externally directed you speak of a *without*. In that state you are advised to look *within*. This *within* is relative to the *without* you are seeking. In fact, the Self is neither without nor within.

Speaking of Heaven one thinks of it as above or below, within or without, since one is accustomed to relative knowledge. One seeks only objective knowledge and hence these ideas.

Really speaking there is neither up nor down, neither in nor out. If they were real they must be present in dreamless sleep also. For what is real must be continuous and permanent. Did you feel "in" or "out" in sleep? Of course not.

D.: I do not remember.

M.: If there was anything there that could be remembered. But you admit your existence then. The same Self is now speaking. The Self who was undifferentiated in sleep is differentiated in the present state, and sees the diversity. The Real Existence is the only One devoid of objective knowledge. That is absolute consciousness. That is the state of happiness, as admitted by all of us. That state must be brought about even in this waking state. It is called *jāgrat sushupti*. That is *mukti*.

D.: The ego is the one which reincarnates.

M.: Yes. But what is reincarnation? The ego remains the same. New bodies appear and hold it. The ego does not change. It does not leave one body, seek and find another. Just see what happens even to your gross body. Suppose you go to London. How do you do it? You take a conveyance, go to the docks, board the steamer and reach London in a few days. What has happened? The conveyances had moved, but not your body. Still you say that you travelled from one part of the globe to the other part. The movements of the conveyances have been superimposed on your body. Similarly also with your ego. The reincarnations are superimpositions. For example, what happens in a dream? Do you go to the dream world or does it occur in you? Surely the latter. Just the same with reincarnations. The ego remains changeless all along.

Again, there is no time and space in your sleep. They are concepts which arise after the 'I'-thought has arisen. Before the rise of the 'I'-thought the concepts are absent. Therefore you are beyond time and space. The 'I'-thought is only limited 'I'. The real 'I' is unlimited, universal, beyond time and space. They are absent in sleep. Just on rising up from sleep, and before seeing the objective world, there is a state of awareness which is your pure Self. That must be known.

D.: But I do not realise it.

M.: It is not an object to be realised. You are that. Who is there to realise and what?

312. *Mr. V. K. Cholkar, of Poona:* It is said "Know thyself" or see who the "I" in you is. What is the way to do it? Is it by simply repeating the *mantra* mechanically all along or have you to do it, remembering every moment why you are repeating the *mantra*?

M.: You are always repeating the *mantra* automatically. If you are not aware of the *ajapa* (unspoken chant) which is eternally going on, you should take to *japa*. *Japa* is made with an effort. The effort is meant to ward off other thoughts. Then the *japa* becomes mental and internal. Finally, its *ajapa* and eternal nature will be realised. For it will be found to be going on even without your effort. The effortless state is the state of realisation.

Mr. Cholkar again requested instructions from a practical point of view, *i.e.*, suitable to himself.

M.: It is not external and therefore need not be sought elsewhere. It is internal and also eternal. It is always realised. But you say you are not aware. It requires constant attention to itself. No other effort is necessary. Your effort is only meant not to allow yourself to be distracted by other thoughts.

The person was satisfied.

313. *Mr. Greenlees:* Bhagavan said yesterday that, while one is engaged in search for "God within," outer work would go on automatically. In the life of Sri Chaitanya it is explained that while he sought Krishna (the Self) during his lectures to students, he forgot where his body was and went on talking of Krishna. This rouses doubt whether work can safely be left to itself. Should one keep part-attention on the physical work?

M.: The Self is all. Now I ask you: Are you apart from the Self? Can the work go on apart from the Self? Or is the body apart from the Self? None of them could be apart from the Self. The Self is universal. So all the actions will go on whether you engage in them voluntarily or not. The work will go on automatically. Attending to the Self includes attending to the work.

D.: The work may suffer if I do not attend to it.

M.: Because you identify yourself with the body, you consider that the work is done by you. But the body and its activities, including the work, are not apart from the Self. What does it matter whether you attend to the work or not? Suppose you walk from one place to another place. You do not attend to every single step that you take. After a time, however, you find yourself at your destination. You notice how the work, *i.e.* walking, goes on without your attention to it. Similarly it is with other kinds of work.

D.: Then it is like sleep-walking.

M.: Quite so. When a child is fast asleep, his mother feeds him in sleep. The child eats the food quite as well as when well awake. But the next morning he says to the mother "Mother! I did not take food last night". The mother and others know that he did. But he says that he did not. He was not aware and yet the action had gone on. Somnambulism is indeed a good analogy for this kind of work.

Take another example: A passenger in a cart has fallen asleep. The bulls move or stand still or are unyoked on the journey. He does not know these occurrences, but finds himself in a different place after he wakes up. He has been blissfully ignorant of the occurrences on the way, but his journey has been finished.

Similarly with the Self of the person. He is asleep in the body. His waking state is the movement of the bulls, his *samādhi* is their standing still (because *samādhi* = *jāgratsushupti*) *i.e.* to say, he is aware of but not attached to actions. So the bulls are in harness but do not move. His sleep is the unyoking of the bulls, for there is complete suspension of activities corresponding to the release of the bulls from the yoke.

Still another example: Scenes are projected on the screen in a cinema show. But the moving pictures do not affect or alter the screen. The seer pays attention to the pictures and ignores the screen. They cannot remain apart from the screen. Still its existence is ignored. So also the Self is the screen on which the pictures, namely activities, are going on. The man is aware of the latter, ignoring the former. All the same he is not apart from the Self. Whether aware or unaware the actions will continue.

D.: There is an operator in the cinema.

M.: The cinema show is made out of insentient materials. The screen, the pictures, lamp, etc., are insentient and require an operator, a sentient agent. In the case of the Self, it is consciousness itself and therefore self-contained. There cannot be an operator apart.

D. protested that he did not confuse the body with the operator as the above answer would imply.

M.: The functions of the body were kept in mind, involving the need for the operator. Because there is the body—a *jada* object—an operator, a sentient agent, is necessary.

Because people think that they are *jivas*, Sri Krishna has said that God resides in the Heart as the operator of the *jivas*. In fact there are no *jivas* and no operator. The Self comprises all. It is the screen, the pictures, the seer, the actor, the operator, the light and all else. Your confounding it with the body and imagining yourself as the actor amounts to the seer being represented as an actor in a cinema picutre. Imagine the actor in the picture asking if he could enact a scene without the screen. Such is the case of the man who thinks of his acting apart from the Self.

D.: It is like asking the spectator to act in the cinema picture. Somnambulism seems to be desirable.

M.: There is the belief that the crow rolls only one iris into either eye to see any object. It has only one iris but two eye sockets. Its sight is manipulated according to its desire.

Or again the elephant has one trunk with which it breathes and does work such as drinking water, etc.

Again serpents are said to use the same apparatus for either seeing or hearing.

Therefore the actions and states are according to one's point of view. Sleep waking or waking sleep or dreaming sleep or dreaming wakefulness are about the same.

D.: We have to deal with a physical body in a physical waking world. If we sleep while work is done or work when sleep overtakes us, the work will go wrong.

M.: Sleep is not ignorance; it is your pure state. Wakefulness is not knowledge; it is ignorance. There is full awareness in sleep; there is total ignorance in waking.

Your real nature covers both, and extends beyond. The Self is beyond knowledge and ignorance.

Sleep, dream and waking are only modes passing before the Self. They proceed whether you are aware or not. That is the state of the *jnāni* in whom pass the states of waking, *samādhi*, deep sleep and dream, like the bulls moving, standing or being unyoked when the passenger is asleep as aforesaid. These questions are from the point of view of the *ajnāni*; otherwise all these questions do not arise.

D.: Of course they cannot arise for the Self. Who would be there to ask? But unfortunately I have not yet realised the Self.

M.: That is just the obstacle in your way. You must get rid of the idea that you are an *ajnāni* and have still to realise the Self. You are the Self. Was there ever a time when you were apart from the Self?

D.: So it is an experiment in somnambulism...... or in day-dreaming.

Bhagavan laughed.

3rd January, 1937

DROPS OF NECTAR

314. In yesterday's answers, Sri Bhagavan said that the Self is pure consciousness in deep slumber, and He also indicated the Self of the transition from sleep to the waking state as the ideal for realisation. He was requested to explain the same.

Sri Bhagavan graciously answered: The Self is pure consciousness in sleep; it evolves as *aham* ("I") without the *idam* ("this") in the transition stage; and manifests as *aham* ("I") and *idam* ("this") in the waking state. The individual's experience is by means of *aham* ("I") only. So he must aim at realisation in the way indicated (*i.e.* by means of the transitional "I"). Otherwise the sleep-experience does not matter to him. If the transitional "I" be realised the substratum is found and that leads to the goal.

Again, sleep is said to be *ajnāna* (ignorance). That is only in relation to the wrong *jnāna* (knowledge) prevalent in the wakeful state. The waking state is really *ajnāna* (ignorance) and the sleep state is *prajnāna* (full knowledge). *Prajnāna* is Brahma, says the *sruti*. Brahma is eternal. The sleep-experiencer is called *prajna*. He is *prajnānam* in all the three states. Its particular significance in the sleep state is that He is full of knowledge (*prajnānaghana*). What is *ghana?* There are *jnāna* and *vijnāna*. Both together operate in all perceptions. *Vijnāna* in the *jāgrat* is *viparita jnāna* (wrong knowledge) *i.e. ajnānā* (ignorance). It always co-exists with the individual. When this becomes *vispashta jnāna* (clear knowledge), It is Brahma. When wrong knowledge is totally absent, as in sleep, He remains pure *prajnāna* only. That is *Prajnānaghana*. "*Aitreya Upanishad*" says *prajnāna, vijnāna, ajnāna, samjnāna* are all names of Brahma. Being made up of knowledge alone how is He to be experienced? Experience is always with *vijnāna*. Therefore the pure "I" of the transitional stage must be held for the experience of the *Prajnānaghana*. The "I" of the waking state is impure and is not useful for such experience. Hence the use of the transitional "I" or the pure "I". How is this pure "I" to be realised? "*Viveka Chudamani*" says, "*Vijnāna kose vilasatyajasram.*" He is always shining forth in the intellectual sheath (*vijnāna kosa*). "*Tripura Rahasya*" and other works point out that the interval between two consecutive *sankalpas* (ideas or thoughts) represent the pure (*aham*) 'I'. Therefore holding on to the pure 'I', one should have the *Prajnānaghana* for aim, and there is the *vritti* present in the attempt. All these have their proper and respective places and at the same time lead to realisation.

Again the pure Self has been described in "*Viveka Chudamani*" to be beyond *asat, i.e.* different from *asat*. Here *asat* is the contaminated waking 'I'. *Asadvilakshana* means *sat, i.e.* the Self of sleep. He is also described as different from *sat* and *asat*. Both mean the same. He is also *Asesha sākshi* (all-seeing witness).

If pure, how is He to be experienced by means of the impure 'I'? A man says "I slept happily". Happiness was his experience. If not, how could he speak of what he had not experienced? How did he experience happiness in sleep, if the Self was pure? Who is it that speaks of that experience now? The speaker is the *vijnānātma* (ignorant self) and he speaks of *prajnānātma* (pure self). How can that hold? Was this *vijnānātma* present in sleep? His present statement of the experience of happiness in sleep makes one infer his existence in sleep. How then did he remain? Surely not as in the waking state. He was there very subtle. Exceedingly subtle *vijnānātma* experiences the happy *prajnānātma* by means of *māyā* mode. It is like the rays of the moon seen below the branches, twigs and leaves of a tree.

The subtle *vijnānātma* seems apparently a stranger to the obvious *vijnānātma* of the present moment. Why should we infer his existence in sleep? Should we not deny the experience of happiness and be done with this inference? No. The fact of the experience of happiness cannot be denied, for everyone courts sleep and prepares a nice bed for the enjoyment of sound sleep.

This brings us to the conclusion that the cogniser, cognition and the cognised are present in all the three states, though there are differences in their subtleties. In the transitional state, the (*aham*) "I" is (*suddha*) pure, because (*idam*) "this" is suppressed. *Aham* ("I") predominates.

Why is not that pure "I" realised now or even remembered by us? Because of want of acquaintance (*parichaya*) with it. It can be recognised only if it is consciously attained. Therefore make the effort and gain it consciously.

315. One of the attendants asked: Sri Bhagavan has said: 'Reality and myth are both the same'. How is it so?

M.: The *tantriks* and others of the kind condemn Sri Sankara's philosophy as *māya vāda* without understanding him aright. What does he say? He says: (1) Brahma is real; (2) the universe is a myth; (3) Brahma is the universe. He does not stop at the second statement but continues to supplement it with the third. What does it signify? The Universe is conceived to be apart from Brahman and that perception is wrong. The antagonists point to his illustration of *rajju sarpa* (rope-snake). This is unconditioned superimposition. After the truth of the rope is known, the illusion of snake is removed once for all.

But they should take into account the conditioned superimposition also into consideration, e.g. *Marumarichika* or *mrigatrishna* (water of mirage).

The mirage does not disappear even after knowing it to be a mirage. The vision is there but the man does not run to it for water. Sri Sankara must be understood in the light of both the illustrations. The world is a myth. Even after knowing it, it continues to appear. It must be known to be Brahma and not apart.

If the world appears, yet to whom does it appear? he asks. What is your reply? You must say the Self.

If not, will the world appear in the absence of the cognising Self ? Therefore the Self is the reality. That is his conclusion. The phenomena are real as the Self and are myths apart from the Self.

Now, what do the *tantriks,* etc., say ? They say that the phenomena are real because they are part of the Reality in which they appear.

Are not these two statements the same ? That is what I meant by reality and falsehood being one and the same.

The antagonists continue : With the conditioned as well as the unconditioned illusions considered, the phenomenon of water in mirage is purely illusory because that water cannot be used for any purpose. Whereas the phenomenon of the world is different, for it is useful. How then does the latter stand on a par with the former ?

A phenomenon cannot be a reality simply because it serves a purpose or purposes. Take a dream for example. The dream creations are useful ; they serve the dream-purpose. The dream water quenches dream thirst. The dream creation is however contradicted in the waking state. The waking creation is contradicted in the other two states. What is not continuous cannot be real. If real, the thing must ever be real,—and not real for a short time and unreal at other times.

So it is with magical creations. They appear real and are yet illusory.

Similarly the universe cannot be real of itself—that is to say, apart from the underlying Reality.

316. There is fire on the screen in a cinema show. Does it burn the screen ? There is a cascade of water. Does it wet the screen ? There are tools. Do they damage the screen ?

That is why it is said *Achchedyoyam, adahyoyam, akledhyoyam,* etc. Fire, water, etc., are phenomena on the screen of Brahma (*i.e.* the Self) and they do not affect It.

6th January, 1937

317. *Mr. Parkhi:* Many visitors here tell me that they get visions or thought-currents from you. I am here for the last month and a half and still I have not the slightest experience of any kind. Is it because I am unworthy of your grace? If so, I feel it disgraceful that I being *Vasishtakulotpanna* (of the lineage of Vasishta) should not have your grace, while far-off foreigners should have it. Will you kindly suggest some *prāyaschitta* (method of expiation) for removing this disgrace?

M.: Visions and thought-currents are had according to the state of mind. It depends on the individuals and not upon the Universal Presence. Moreover, they are immaterial. What matters is Peace of mind.

D.: Peace of mind is the result of trance. How is trance got?

M.: Trance is only absence of thoughts. That state prevails in sleep. Do you have enduring peace of mind on that account?

D.: It is said in the journal maintained in the Asramam that trance is necessary.

M.: Trance is not something apart to be got anew. Your natural state is that of trance.

D.: But I do not feel it.

M.: The fact of your contrary belief is the obstruction.

D.: Since I have not realised the Self I say that I do not understand my permanent state of trance.

M.: This is only a repetition. That is the obstruction. This arises because you think that the non-self is you. That is the mistake. Do not take the non-self to be the Self. Then the Self will be evident to you.

D. : I understand it theoretically but not practically.

M. : There are no two selves—for the self to speak of the non-realisation of the Self.

D. : It is still theoretical to me. How shall I get the trance ?

M. : Trance is only temporary in its effects. There is happiness so long as it lasts. After rising from it the old *vāsanas* return. Unless the *vāsanas* are destroyed in *sahaja samādhi* (effortless *samādhi*) there is no good of trance.

D. : But trance must precede *sahaja samādhi* ?

M. : Trance is the natural state. Although there are activities and phenomena, yet they do not affect the trance. If they are realised to be not apart from the Self the Self is realised. Where is the use of trance, unless it brings about enduring peace of mind ? Know that even now you are in trance whatever happens. That is all.

D. : But how shall I do it ?

A scholar remarked : "*Yato vācho nivartante aprāpya manasā saha*" (where words fail to reach, along with the mind).

The questioner retorted : It is also said '*manasaiva āptavyam*" (to be realised with the mind only).

M. : Yes. The Pure Mind, *i.e.* the mind free from thoughts is the Self. The pure mind is beyond the impure mind.

D. : "Seen with the subtlest of subtle intellect by subtle seers."

M. : What was said of mind applies to this also.

D. : If trance be my natural state, why is it said that trance is necessary to be got before Realisation ?

M. : That means that one should be aware of his eternal state of trance. Inattentiveness to it is ignorance. *Pramādho vai mrtyuh* (Inattention is death itself).

D.: How can I be attentive without getting trance beforehand ?

M.: Very well. If you are so anxious for trance any narcotic will bring it about. Drug-habit will be the result and not liberation. There are *vāsanas* in the latent state even in trance. The *vāsanas* must be destroyed.

Another devotee: Can there be Self-Realisation before the *vāsanas* are entirely destroyed ?

M.: There are two kinds of *vāsanas*: (1) *bandha hetuh,* causing bondage for the ignorant, and (2) *bhoga hetuh,* giving enjoyment for the wise. The latter do not obstruct realisation.

D.: Are the Self-realised persons reborn ? *e.g.,* Vamadeva, Jada Bharata, etc.

M.: The Realised ones cannot be reborn. Rebirth is due to *vāsanas* which are binding. But they are destroyed in the state of Self-realisation.

D.: Are we to take it that they had gone to the stage of *Kevala Nirvikalpa* but not to *Sahaja Nirvikalpa* ?

M.: Yes.

D.: If *vāsanas* for enjoyment only do not obstruct the state of realisation and if one can look upon the events of the world without his state of bliss being disturbed, it means that attachment alone is bondage. Am I right ?

M.: Yes, quite. Attachment is bondage. Attachment disappears with the elimination of the ego.

D.: Realisation is said to be helped by Guru's Grace.

M.: Guru is none other than the Self.

D.: Krishna had Sandipini for his Guru and so Rama had Vasishta.

M.: Guru is said to be external for the seeker. The in-turn of the mind is brought about by the Guru.

Since the seeker is outward-bent he is advised to learn from a Guru whom he will in due course find to be the Self.

D.: May I have Guru's Grace?

M.: Grace is always there.

D.: But I do not feel the same.

M.: Surrender will make one understand the Grace.

D.: I have surrendered heart and soul. I am the best judge of my heart. Still I do not feel the Grace.

M.: If you had surrendered the questions would not arise.

D.: I have surrendered. Still the questions arise.

M.: Grace is constant. Your judgment is the variable. Where else should the fault lie?

D.: I must be enabled to surrender myself.

M.: Thayumanavar has said: "Glory to Thee for enabling me to discuss so much and follow Thy words so far!"

7th January, 1937

318. A Hindi gentleman asked how the fear of death could be got over.

M.: Find out if you were born before you think of death. Only he who is born could die. You are as good as dead even in sleep. What fear is there of death?

D.: How are we in sleep?

M.: Ask that question in sleep. You recall the experience of sleep only when you are awake. You recall that state by saying "I slept happily".

D.: What is the instrument by which we experience that state?

M.: We call it *Māyākarana* as opposed to the *antahkarana* to which we are accustomed in our other states. The same instruments are called differently in the different states, even as the *ānandātman* of sleep is termed the *vijnānātman* of the wakeful state.

D.: Please furnish me with an illustration for the *Māyākarana* experiencing the *ānanda.*

M.: How can you say "I slept happily"? The experience is there to prove your happiness. There cannot be the remembrance in the wakeful state in the absence of the experience in the sleep state.

D.: Agreed. But please give me an illustration.

M.: How can it be described? If you dive into water for recovering an article you speak of its recovery only after rising out of the water. You do not say anything while remaining sunk in water.

D.: I do not have fear in sleep whereas I have it now.

M.: Because *dwiteeyātvai bhayam bhavati*—fear is always of a second one. Of what are you afraid?

D.: By reason of the perception of the body, the senses, the world, Iswara, doership, enjoyment, etc.

M.: Why do you see them if they cause fear?

D.: Because they are inescapable.

M.: But it is you who see them. For whom is the fear? Is it for them?

D.: No, it is for me.

M.: Because you see them, you fear them. Do not see them and there will be no fear.

D.: What then should I do in the waking state?

M.: Be the Self; there will be no second thing to cause you fear.

D.: Yes. Now I understand. If I see my Self, then the sight is warded off the non-self and there is happiness. Yet there is the fear of death.

M.: Only the one who is born should die. See if you have been born at all in order that death should threaten you.

319. Mr. Sridhar, a Hindu from Goa, asked : "What is *kousalam* (skill) in "*Yogah karmasu kousalam*" (yoga is skill in action). How is that gained ?"

M.: Do actions without caring for the result. Do not think that you are the doer. Dedicate the work to God. That is the skill and also the way to gain it.

D.: "*Samatva yoga uchyate*" (Equanimity is yoga). What is that equanimity ?

M.: It is unity in diversity. The universe is now seen to be diverse. See the common factor (*sama*) in all the objects. When that is done equality in the pairs of opposites (*dwandhwāni*) naturally follows. It is the latter which is however spoken of as equanimity ordinarily.

D.: How is the common factor to be perceived in the diversity ?

M.: The seer is only one. They do not appear without the seer. There is no change in the seer, however much the others may change.

Yogah karmasu kousalam=Skill in work is yoga,
Samatvam yoga uchyate=Equanimity is yoga,
Māmekam saranam vraja=Only surrender to Me,
Ekamevādwiteeyam=Only one without a second,

representing Karma, Yoga, Bhakti and Jnana convey the same meaning. They are only the single Truth presented in different aspects.

Mr. Ekanatha Rao: Is Grace necessary for it ?

M.: Yes.

D.: How to gain Divine Grace ?

M.: By surrender.

D.: Still I do not feel Grace.

M.: Sincerity is wanting. Surrender should not be verbal nor conditional.

Passages from St. Justinian were read to illustrate these statements.

Prayer is not verbal. It is from the heart. To merge into the Heart is prayer. That is also Grace.

The Alwar says: "I was all along seeking Thee. But on realising the Self I find you are the Self. The Self is my all, and so you are my All."

D.: Impurities of limitation, ignorance and action (*ānava, māyiya,* and *kārya*) place obstacles in the way of meditation. How to conquer them?

M.: Not to be swayed by them.

D.: Grace is necessary.

M.: Yes, Grace is both the beginning and the end. Introversion is due to Grace; Perseverance is Grace; and Realisation is Grace. That is the reason for the statement: *"Māmekam saranam vraja"* (only surrender to Me). If one has entirely surrendered oneself is there any part left to ask for Grace? He is swallowed up by Grace.

D.: The obstacles are powerful and obstruct meditation.

M.: If a Higher Power is recognised and surrendered to, how will they obstruct you? If you say "They are powerful," the source of their Power must be held so that they do not obstruct you.

320. In the course of an informal conversation Sri Bhagavan pointed out that Self-Realisation is possible only for the fit. The *vāsanas* must be eliminated before *jnāna* dawns. One must be like Janaka for *jnāna* to dawn. One must be ready to sacrifice everything for the Truth. Complete renunciation is the index of fitness.

321. *D.*: Miseries appear in *jāgrat.* Why should they appear?

M.: If you see your Self they will not appear.

D.: If I turn to look who I am I do not find anything.

M.: How did you remain in your sleep? There was no 'I'-thought there and you were happy. Whereas there are thoughts flowering in the wake of the root-thought 'I' in the *jāgrat* and these hide the inherent happiness. Get rid of these thoughts which are the obstacles to happiness. Your natural state is one of happiness as was evident in your sleep.

D.: I do not know anything of my sleep experience.

M.: But you know that it was happiness. Otherwise you would not be saying "I slept happily". When there is no thought, no 'I', and nothing in fact except yourself, you are happy. That is the whole Truth.

This is exactly what is conveyed by the Mahavakya "*Tatvamasi*" (You are That). Find your Self; and then "That" is known.

D.: How is that Brahman?

M.: Why do you want to know of Brahman apart from yourself? The scripture says "You are That". The Self is intimate to you and you cannot indeed be without the Self. Realise it. That is the Realisation of Brahman also.

D.: But I am unable to do it. I am too weak to realise my Self.

M.: In that case surrender yourself unreservedly and the Higher Power will reveal Itself.

D.: What is unconditional surrender?

M.: If one surrenders oneself there will be no one to ask questions or to be thought of. Either the thoughts are eliminated by holding on to the root-thought 'I' or one surrenders oneself unconditionally to the Higher Power. These are the only two ways for Realisation.

322. A cultured lady, daughter of a well-known solicitor of Madras, asked: What should one do in order to remain free from thoughts as advised by you? Is it only the enquiry "Who am I?"

M.: Only to remain still. Do it and see.

D.: It is impossible.

M.: Exactly. For the same reason the enquiry "Who am I?" is advised.

D.: Raising the question, no response comes from within.

M.: What kind of response do you expect? Are you not there? What more?

D.: Thoughts rise up more and more.

M.: Then and there raise the same question, "Who am I?"

D.: Should I do so as each thought arises? Well. Is the world our thought only?

M.: Leave this question to the world. Let it ask, "How did I come into being?"

D.: Do you mean that it is not related to me?

M.: Nothing is perceived in deep sleep; all these are seen only after waking; only after thoughts arise the world comes into being; what can it be but thought?

Another visitor asked: What should we do to make the mind still?

M.: First let the mind be caught hold of and brought here; then we shall consider ways and means of stilling it.

D.: I meant to say that it is always changing—even when we do our *japa*.

M.: *Japa* is meant only for stilling the mind.

D.: What *japa* is good for it?

M.: Anything suitable, such as *Gāyatri*.

D. Will *Gāyatri* do?

M.: Can anything excel it? Only those who cannot do it look for others. It contains the whole range of truth in it. Chanting (*japa*) will lead to *dhyāna* (meditation) and it is the means for realising the Self.

D.: Will half an hour a day do for it?

M.: It must be done always, or as long as you can.

323. While explaining stanza 6 in "*Arunachala Ashtaka,*" Sri Bhagavan observed as follows :—

The final word in the previous stanza asks, "Is there one ?" The initial words in the present stanza answer, "Yes, there is the One . . . . ". It proceeds, "Though it is the only One, yet by its wonderful power it gets reflected on the tiny dot 'I' (the ego) otherwise known as ignorance or the aggregate of latent tendencies ; this reflected light is relative knowledge. This, according to one's *prārabdha* (past karma now fructifying), manifests the inner latent tendencies as the outer gross world and withdraws the gross external world as the subtle internal tendencies ; such power is called mind in the subtle plane and brain in the physical plane. This mind or brain acts as the magnifier to that Eternal One Being and shows It forth as the expanded universe. In the waking and dream states the mind is out-ward bent and in sleep it is in-ward bent ; with the mind as the medium, the one Supreme Being seems diversified in the waking and dream states and remains withdrawn in the sleep state, or swoon, etc. Therefore you are only That and cannot be otherwise. Whatever the changes the same One Being remains as yourself ; there is nothing besides yourself."

The previous stanza says : Once exposed to sunlight, a sensitive plate cannot take on images ; similarly, the mind (the sensitive plate), after exposure in Your Light, cannot reflect the world any more. Moreover, the Sun is of You only. Should his rays be so powerful as to prevent images being formed, how much more so should Your Light be ? It is thus said that there is nothing apart from the One Being, Yourself.

In the present stanza the tiny dot=the ego; the tiny dot made up of darkness = the ego consisting of latent tendencies ; the seer or the subject or the ego rising, it expands itself as the seen, the object or the *antahkaranas* (the inner organs). The light must be dim in order to enable the ego to rise up. In broad daylight a rope does not look like a snake. The rope itself cannot be seen in thick darkness ; so there is no chance of mistaking it for a snake. Only in dim light, in the dusk, in light darkened by shadows or in darkness lighted by dim light does the mistake occur of a rope seeming a snake. Similarly it is for the Pure Radiant Being to rise up as the ego—it is possible only in Its Light diffused through darkness. This darkness is otherwise known as the Original Ignorance (Original Sin). The Light passing through it is called Reflected Light. The Reflected Light on its own merits is commonly known as the Pure Mind or Isvara or God. Isvara is well-known to be unified with *Māyā* ; in other words the Reflected Light is Isvara.

The other name—Pure Mind—implies impure mind also. It is the *rājasic* or active mind or the ego ; this too can be projected from the former *sātvic* mind through another reflection only ; thus the ego is the product of the second darkness (*avidyā*). Then comes the *tāmasic* or the dull mind in the shape of *antahkaranas* (the inner organs) ; this appears as the world.

From the standpoint of the gross body it may be said to shine forth externally as the world by means of the brain.

But the gross body is of the mind only. The mind may be said to consist of four inner organs, or the principle composed of thoughts, or the sixth sense ; or combining intellect with the ego, and *chitta* with the mind (i.e. memory-faculty with the thinking faculty), it may be taken to consist of two parts (the ego and the mind). In the latter case the *vijnānātma* (the intellectual Self) or the ego or the seer forms the subject, and the mental sheath or the seen the object.

The waking, dream and sleep states have their origin in the Original Darkness (*mula avidyā*). With the mind outgoing and deriving experiences from its modes in the waking and dream states, and indrawn in sleep, experiencing with modes of *Māyā*, a unique Power regulates all activities of the individuals and of the universe. All these are only phenomena passing through the Reflected Light on the substratum of the Self-radiant Being.

Just as a rope-snake cannot be seen in broad daylight, nor rope itself in thick darkness, so also the world appears neither in the Samadhi state of Self-shining pure Being nor in deep sleep, swoon, etc. Only in Reflected Light (Light mixed with Darkness or knowledge soiled by Ignorance) can the world, *not independent of its Source,* seem to rise up, flourish and be resolved. Its diversity too cannot be exclusive of the Reality, the original Source. Here a Play is going on in which the One Single Being becomes manifold, is objectified and then withdrawn. There must be a Śakti (Power) to do it, and wonderful too! She cannot also be independent of Her origin. In the Self-shining Pure Being this Śakti cannot be seen. Nevertheless, Her actions are only too well-known. How sublime!

From Her sublime original activity (i.e., power vibrating) *satva*-filled reflection results; from it the *rājasic* ego; then *tāmasic* thought-forms which are commonly known as knowledge, or the light corresponding to the magnifying lens. Just as the artificial light is projected through a lens on to the screen, so also the Reflected Light passes through thought (the magnifier) before expanding as the world beyond it; furthermore, thought, itself the world in seed form, seems to be the wide external world. Such is the extraordinary Power! In this way Iswara, individual and the world are only of the

Reflected Light, having the Self-shining Single Being for the substratum.

Now, what is this 'I'-thought (the ego)? Is it the subject or the object, in the scheme of things?

Inasmuch as it witnesses all other objects in the waking and dream states, or at any rate we think that it does so, it must be considered to be the subject. On realising the Pure Self, however, it will be an object only.

Whose is this I-thought (the ego)? This investigation forms the *vichara*.

'I'-thought and 'this'-thought are both emanations from the same Light. They are related to *rajoguna* and *tamoguna* respectively. In order to have the Reflected Light (pure *satva*), free from *rajas* and *tamas*, it must shine forth as 'I'-'I', unbroken by 'this'-thought. This pure state momentarily intervenes between sleep and waking. If prolonged it is cosmic consciousness, or even Iswara. This is the only passage to the Realisation of the Self-shining Supreme Being.

Again there are two kinds of experience in deep sleep as recollected after waking, that is, "I slept *happily, unaware* of anything". Happiness and ignorance are the experiences. Thus we see the Power modified as (1) *āvarana* (darkness) and (2) *vikshepa* (diversity). The mind is the result of *vikshepa*.

10th January, 1937

SOME REMINISCENCES.

324. (1) While in Skandasramam, Sri Bhagavan saw a white toad, small and long, at a distance of about 10 feet from Him. Sri Bhagavan stared at it and it stared at Him. Suddenly, it took a long jump and lodged itself precisely on one of the eyes of Sri Bhagavan who quickly closed it and so it was not injured.

(2) There were two peacocks which used to strut with their feathers spread out like a spangled fan. A cobra too used to take part in the pastime and raised its hood and moved about in their midst.

(3) Sri Bhagavan says that the peacock, as soon as it sights a green lizard, goes straight to it and meekly places its neck down before the lizard which bites it off and kills the peacock.

(4) Rangaswami Iyengar was once out on the hill. A leopard was near by. He threw a stone. It turned towards him. He hurried away for his life. Sri Bhagavan met him on the way and asked what the matter was. Iyengar simply said 'leopard' as he was running. Sri Bhagavan went where the beast was and it moved away soon after. All this happened at the time of the plague. Leopards used to roam freely by the side of the temple, sometimes in twos and threes.

(5) Sri Bhagavan said, "A frog is often compared to a yogi. It remains quiet for a long time, the only sign of life being the rhythmic movement of the underskin below the neck.

"Again frogs can remain for extraordinary long periods with their animation suspended. They are said to swallow their tongues. Swallowing the tongue is a yogic practice. The animation is suspended. The yogi does not die but the tongue must be drawn out by someone else before life-activity is resumed. It is a wonder how the frog brings out the already swallowed tongue and resumes activity."

11th January, 1937

(6) While reading "Raghuveeran" — *Ramayana* written in easy Malayalam prose—there was a passage relating how Hanuman reached Lanka mentally before he crossed over physically to that island. Sri Bhagavan

emphasised the point that the mental approach accomplishes the purpose earlier than physical action.

(7) Sri Bhagavan related the following funny anecdote: Ezhuthachan, a great Malayali saint and author, had a few fish concealed on him when he entered the temple. Some enemy reported it to the worshippers in the temple. The man was searched and taken to the king. The king asked him, "Why did you take the fish into the temple"? He replied: "It is not my fault. I had it concealed in my clothes. The others exposed the fish in the temple. The fault lies in exposure. Excreta within the body are not considered filthy; but when excreted, they are considered filthy. So also with this."

12th January, 1937

325. Mr. Rama Sastri from Guntur District composed eight slokas on Sri Bhagavan and read them out with feeling.

The Sastri then prayed for guidance. "I am a *samsāri* unfit for *jnāna mārga*. The affairs of the world are distracting me. Please instruct me what I should do."

M.: Think of Bhagavan. How will the affairs of the world distract Him? You and they are in Him.

D.: May I do *nāma smarana*? What *nāma* shall I take?

M.: You are Rama Sastri. Make that name significant. Be one with Rama.

13th January, 1937

326. In answer to a question by a long resident attendant Sri Bhagavan said: "Everybody complains of the restlessness of the mind. Let the mind be found and then they will know. True, when a man sits down to meditate thoughts rush up by dozens. The mind is only a bundle of thoughts. The attempt to push through the

barrage of thoughts is unsuccessful. If one can by any means abide in the Self it is good. For those who are unable to do so, chanting or meditation (*japa* or *dhyāna*) is prescribed. It is like giving a piece of chain to an elephant to hold in its trunk. The trunk of the elephant is usually restless. It puts it out in all directions when taken out in the streets of the town. If given a chain to carry the restlessness is checked. Similarly with the restless mind. If made to engage in *japa* or *dhyāna*, other thoughts are warded off ; and the mind concentrates on a single thought. It thus becomes peaceful. It does not mean that peace is gained without a prolonged struggle. The other thoughts must be fought out.

Here is another illustration. Suppose a cow plays rogue and strays into neighbours' fields to graze. She is not easily weaned from her stealthy habit. Think how she can be kept in the stall. If forcibly tethered in the stall she simply bides her time to play the rogue. If she is tempted with fine grass in the stall she takes one mouthful on the first day and again waits for the opportunity to run away. The next day she takes two mouthfuls; so she takes more and more on each succeeding day, until finally she is weaned from her wicked tendencies. When entirely free from bad habits she might be safely left free and she would not stray into neighbours' pasture land. Even when beaten in the stall, she does not afterwards leave the place. Similarly with the mind. It is accustomed to stray outward by the force of the latent *vāsanas* manifesting as thoughts. So long as there are *vāsanas* contained within they must come out and exhaust themselves. The thoughts comprise the mind. Searching what the mind is, the thoughts will recoil and the seeker will know that they arise from the Self. It is the aggregate of these thoughts that we call 'mind'. If one realises that the thoughts arise from the Self and abide in their source, the mind will disappear. After the mind ceases to exist and bliss of peace has been realised, one will find it then as difficult to bring out a thought, as he now finds it difficult to keep out all thoughts. Here the mind is the cow playing the rogue; the thoughts are the neighbours' pasture; one's own primal being free from thoughts is the stall.

The bliss of peace is too good to be disturbed. A man fast asleep hates to be awakened and ordered to mind his business. The bliss of sleep is too enthralling to be sacrificed to the work born of thoughts. The thought-free state is one's primal state and full of bliss. Is it not miserable to leave such a state for the thought-ridden and unhappy one?

If one wants to abide in the thought-free state, a struggle is inevitable. One must fight one's way through before regaining one's original primal state. If one succeeds in the fight and reaches the goal, the enemy, namely the thoughts, will all subside in the Self and disappear entirely. The thoughts are the enemy. They amount to the creation of the Universe. In their absence there is neither the world nor God the Creator. The Bliss of the Self is the single Being only.

When Prahlada was in *samādhi,* Vishnu thought within Himself:

"This *asura* being in *samādhi,* all the *asuras* are in peace. There is no fight, no trial of strength, no search for power, nor the means for gaining power. In the absence of such means for power—*yāga, yajna,* etc., i.e., the gods, are not thriving; there is no new creation; nor even is any existence justified. So I will wake him up; then the *asuras* will rise up; their original nature will manifest itself; the gods will challenge them; the *asuras* and others will then seek strength and adopt the means for its acquisition. *Yajnas,* etc., will flourish; the gods will thrive ; there will be more and more of creation, more of fight and I shall have enough to do."

So Vishnu awakened Prahlada, blessing him with eternal life and *jivanmukti*. *Deva-asura* fight was resumed and the old order of things was restored so that the universe continues in its eternal nature.

D.: How could God Himself wake up the *asura* element and bring about constant warfare ? Is not Pure Goodness the nature of God ?

M.: Goodness is only relative. Good always implies bad also; they always co-exist. The one is the obverse of the other.

327. The audience in the hall were very attentively listening. One of them, a sincere devotee of Sri Bhagavan, was so impressed by it that he soon lost himself. He later described his experience as follows :—

"I was long wondering where the 'current' starts, within the body or elsewhere. Suddenly, my body grew tenuous until it disappeared. The enquiry "Who am I ?" went on very clearly and forcibly. The sound of 'I'-'I'-'I' alone persisted. There was one vast expanse and nothing more. There was a hazy perception of the occurrences in the hall. I knew that people stood up to salute at the end of the Vedic chant. I wanted to stand ; the thought soon deserted me. I was again lost in the one expanse. The experience continued until I heard the voice of Sri Bhagavan. That made me collect myself. Then I stood up and saluted. A strange feeling continued for more than half an hour. I cannot forget it. It is still haunting me."

Sri Bhagavan listened to his words and was silent for some minutes. A few observations fell from His lips :

One may seem to go out of the body. But the body itself is no more than our thought. There can be no body in the absence of thought ; no outgoing or incoming in the absence of body. However, owing to habit, the feeling of going out arises.

A particle of hail falling on the surface of the sea melts away and becomes water, wave, froth, etc., in the sea. Similarly, the subtle intellect, rising up as the tiny dot (ego) from the heart and bulging out, finally enters into and becomes one with the Heart.

Though milk remains as wide as the sea, can you drink it with a mouth as wide as the sea ? You can suck it only through the tiny capillaries of the paps.

Nammalvar, the Vaishnavite saint, has said : "Only my Self is You". What does it mean ? "Before I realised my Self I was wandering looking out for You ; having now realised my Self I see that you are my Self." How will this fit in with qualified monism ? It must be explained thus : "Pervading my Self you remain as the *antaryāmin* (Immanent Being). Thus I am a part of your body and you are the owned of the body (*sariri*)".

Having given up one's own body as not being oneself why should one become another's (God's) body ? If one body is not the Self other bodies also are non-self. The protagonists of qualified monism think that individuality is necessary to experience the Bliss. Individuality, i.e., 'I'-ness should not be lost. Aha ! The Self is not the body but your Self becomes the body of God ! Is it not absurd ?

Or if you make *prapatti* (surrender yourself) to God, you have made yourself over to Him and you are His and no longer yours. If He is in need of a body let Him look out for Himself. You need not say He is the owner of a body.

17th January, 1937

328. A European gentleman began in measured tones and spoke clearly and slowly : "Why should individuals remain caught up in the affairs of this world and reap

troubles as a result? Should they not be free? If they are in the spiritual world they will have greater freedom."

M.: The world is only spiritual. Since you are identifying yourself with the physical body you speak of this world as being physical and the other world as spiritual. Whereas, that which is, is only spiritual.

D.: Do the disembodied souls, i.e., the spirits, have a deeper insight and enjoy greater freedom?

M.: Because you identify yourself with this body, you speak of the disembodied souls as being spirits. From these limitations you talk of their limitations and seek to know their capacities. Even the disembodied souls have subtle bodies; otherwise, you would not say "disembodied souls". Disembodiment means "divested of this gross body". In as much as you endow them with individuality they are centred in their subtle bodies. Their limitations will be according to their own state. Just as you feel the burden of your limitations they also feel the burden of their limitations. What I meant by spirit and spiritual world is the absolute spirit and not relative. If you realise yourself as the spirit you will see that this world is only spiritual and not physical.

D.: Are their bodies temporary as our bodies are? Do they reincarnate?

M.: These questions arise because you think yourself the body. This body has birth and death and when this body falls another body arises which is called reincarnation. But are you the body? If you find that you are not this body but the spirit, you will be free from gross or subtle bodies, and then there will be no limitations. Where is the world, physical or spiritual, in the absence of any limitations? How will the question of reincarnation arise?

Again, consider it from another point of view: You create a dream-body for yourself in the dream and act with that dream-body. The same is falsified in the waking state. At present you think that you are this body and not the dream-body. In your dream this body is falsified by the dream-body. So that, you see, neither of these bodies is real. Because each of them is true for a time and false at other times. That which is real must be real for ever. But you say 'I'. This 'I'-consciousness is present all through the three states. There is no change in it. That is alone real. The three states are false. They are only for the mind. It is the mind which obstructs your vision of your true nature. Your true nature is that of infinite spirit. That was the case in your sleep. You note the limitations in the other two states. What is the difference due to? There was no mind in sleep, but it exists in the dream and the waking states. The feeling of limitation is the work of the mind. What is mind? Find it. If you search for it it will vanish by itself. For it has no real existence. It is comprised of thoughts. It disappears with the cessation of thoughts.

D.: Do I remain then?

M.: What is your experience in sleep? There were no thoughts, no mind, and yet you remained then.

D.: When I try to meditate, I am unable to do so because my mind wanders. What should I do?

M.: Your question furnishes the answer. First, with regard to the first part of the question, you say you concentrate, but do not succeed. 'You' means 'the Self'. On what do you concentrate? Where do you fail? Are there two selves, for the one self to concentrate on the other? Which is the self now complaining of failure? There cannot be two selves. There is only one Self. That need not concentrate.

"But then, why is there no happiness ?"—you ask. What is it that prevents you from remaining as the spirit which you are in sleep ? You yourself admit that it is the wandering mind. Find out the mind. If its 'wandering' stops, it will be found to be the Self—your 'I'-consciousness which is spirit eternal. It is beyond knowledge and ignorance.

D. : I am hard-worked and find little time to practise concentration. Are there any aids for it ? Is control of breath a good aid ?

M. : *Prāna* and mind arise from the same source. The source can be reached by holding the breath or tracing the mind. If you cannot do the latter the former will no doubt be helpful. Regulation of breath is gained by watching its movements.

If the mind is watched thoughts cease. Peace results and it is your true nature. King Janaka said : "I have now found the robber (namely, the mind) who has been robbing me of my 'I'-ness. I will instantly kill this thief." The perturbation owing to thoughts appears to rob the Self of its peace. The perturbation is the mind. When that ceases the mind is said to take flight. The Self remains as the undisturbed substratum.

Another person interposed : "The mind must kill the mind".

M. : Yes, if there be the mind. A search for it discloses its non-existence. How can anything that does not exist be killed ?

D. : Is not mental *japa* better than oral *japa* ?

M. : Oral *japa* consists of sounds. The sounds arise from thoughts. For one must think before one expresses the thoughts in words. The thoughts form the mind. Therefore mental *japa* is better than oral *japa*.

D. : Should we not contemplate the *japa* and repeat it orally also ?

M.: When the *japa* becomes mental where is the need for the sounds thereof?

Japa, becoming mental, becomes contemplation. *Dhyāna,* contemplation and mental *japa* are the same. When thoughts cease to be promiscuous and one thought persists to the exclusion of all others it is said to be contemplation. The object of *japa* or *dhyāna* is the exclusion of several thoughts and confining oneself to one single thought. Then that thought too vanishes into its source—absolute consciousness, i.e., the Self. The mind engages in *japa* and then sinks into its own source.

D.: The mind is said to be from the brain.

M.: Where is the brain? It is in the body. I say that the body itself is a projection of the mind. You speak of the brain when you think of the body. It is the mind which creates the body, the brain in it and also ascertains that the brain is its seat.

D.: Sri Bhagavan has said in one of the works that the *japa* must be traced to its source. Is it not the mind that is meant?

M.: All these are only the workings of the mind. *Japa* helps to fix the mind to a single thought. All other thoughts are first subordinated until they disappear. When it becomes mental it is called *dhyāna*. *Dhyāna* is your true nature. It is however called *dhyāna* because it is made with effort. Effort is necessary so long as thoughts are promiscuous. Because you are with other thoughts, you call the continuity of a single thought, meditation or *dhyāna*. If that *dhyāna* becomes effortless it will be found to be your real nature.

329. In the morning Sri Bhagavan read out a short passage from St. Estella in the Tamil "*Ramakrishna Vijayam*". Its purport is: "Your enemies are lust, passion, etc. If you feel injured turn within and find out the cause of the injury. It is not external to you. The external causes are mere superimpositions. If you cannot injure yourself, will the all-merciful God injure you in any manner ? "

Sri Bhagavan further said that St. Estella was a good saint, whose teachings were quite sound.

330. Sri Bhagavan, being asthmatic, is hoarse in throat. Oranges were brought as offerings. Pieces were distributed as usual. Sri Bhagavan was clearing His throat and was obliged to spit out the orange in His mouth. He said that He had to spit it out. A gentleman said : " Probably, it does not suit Sri Bhagavan's health.".

M. : Would you say so if you had brought the fruits, instead of the other person ?

18th January, 1937

331. Mrs. Roorna Jennings, an American lady of the International Peace League, asked Sri Bhagavan about the spread of Peace in the world.

Sri Bhagavan replied that if one gains the Peace of the Self it will spread itself without any effort on the part of the individual. When one is not oneself peaceful, how can that one spread peace in the world ?

The lady asked if it was not true that the East has a scientific approach to the Realisation of the Self.

M. : You are already the Self. No elaborate science is necessary to establish it.

D. : I understand the general truth of it. But there must be a practical method for it which I call 'science'.

M. : The cessation of such thoughts is the realisation of the Self. Illustration : the necklace supposed lost. One does not see the world or one's own body, being away from the Self. Always in the Self, one sees everything else. God and the world are all in the Heart. See the Seer and everything will be found to be the Self. Change your outlook. Look within. Find the Self. Who is the substratum of the subject and the object? Find it and all problems are solved.

The lady was then told of the pamphlet, "*Who am I?*". She agreed to read it before asking further questions of Sri Bhagavan.

332. *D.:* What are the three voids (Muppazh) (முப்பாழ்) in Tamil?

M.: (1) *Tat*=Isvara *turiya.*
(2) *tvam*=Jiva *turiya.*
(3) *asi*=asi *turiya.*

Turiya is the substratum of the waking, dream and sleep states.

D.: The first two are all right; what is the third?

M.: All-Pervasiveness is said to be the waking;
all-shiningness is said to be the dream;
perfection (*ananta*) is said to be the sleep;
that which underlies these is *asi-turiya.*

D.: It is so strange!

M.: Is that all? There is no limit to polemics. Listen. They say the *mahavākya Tattvamasi* is common; another containing five words *Tat tvam asi ati nijam* is the most secret one taught by Dakshinamurti in Silence; corresponding to the five words they formulate five states.

Again look at "*Vichāra Sāgara*"; the author distinguishes *ādhāra* from *adhiśthana.* According to him the rope is always *ādhāra* both when it looks like a snake and otherwise. The rope is *adhiśthana* because it looks different from what it really is; this is common (*sāmānya adhiśthana*). Again its appearance as the snake itself is *visesha adhiśthana.* Then the question is raised: the *adhiśthana* of Jiva is one; that of Iswara is another; how can these two *adhiśthanas* become one? He replies, there are the same *adhārā* for both the *adhiśthanas.*

Furthermore he mentions several *khyātis* ;

(1) *asat-khyāti* : rope being present, there appears the snake which is *not present* there.
(2) *sat-khyāti* : rope itself looking like snake:
(3) *ātma-khyāti* : rope remaining unidentified, the remembrance of snake, formerly seen elsewhere, creates the illusion.
(4) *akhyāti* : totally unreal.
(5) *anyathā-khyāti* : mental image of snake projected and seen as if it were in front of oneself.
(6) *anirvachaniya-khyāti* : inexplicable.

Here he raises the question : Should the world be any one of these, whether illusory or unreal, it must be the result of previous experience. It must have been real at that time ; real once, must be real always.

He answers it : the experience need not necessarily be real ; not having seen a real snake, but only seeing a picture of it and gaining an impression, one can mistake a rope to be a snake. Thus the world need not be real.

Why waste time in such polemics ? Only turn your mind inward and spend the time usefully.

In the union of the individual with the Supreme, the Supreme is hearsay and the individual directly experienced. You can make use only of direct experience ; therefore look who you are.

Why is Isvara mentioned then ?

Because you see the world and want to know how it came into being. They say that it was created by God. If you know that He created you and all else, your mind is a little satisfied and becomes less restless than otherwise. But it is not realisation. It can be only if you realise yourself ; this is Perfection or Realisation, etc.

To resume polemics—the author of "*Vritti Prabhakara*" claims to have studied 350,000 books before writing this book. What is the use? Can they bring in Realisation of the Self? "*Vichāra Sāgara*" is full of logic and technical terms. Can these ponderous volumes serve any real purpose? However, some people read them and then seek sages only to see if they can meet their questions. To read them, to discover new doubts and to solve them, is a source of pleasure to them. Knowing it to be sheer waste, the sages do not encourage such people. Encourage them once and there will be no end.

Only the Enquiry into the Self can be of use.

Those familiar with logic, "*Vritti Prabhākara*", "*Vichāra Sāgara*" or "*Sutra Bhāshya,*" or similar large works, cannot relish small works like "*Truth Revealed*" dealing only with the Self and that pointedly too, because they have accumulated *vāsanas*. Only those whose minds are less muddy, or are pure, can relish small and purposeful works.

333. *Pratyabhijna*=*Prati*+*abhijna.*

abhijna is direct perception; *prati* is to be reminded of what was already known.

"*This is an elephant*" is *direct* perception.

"*This is that elephant*" is *pratyabhijna.*

In technical works, *pratyabhijna* is used for realising the ever-present Reality and recognising it.

Sunya (void or blank), *ati sunya* (beyond *sunya*) and *mahasunya* (immense void), all mean the same, i.e., the Real Being only.

20th January, 1937

334. Sri Bhagavan said that he felt no sensation in His legs though they were massaged. "If they serve the purpose of walking what does it matter if sensation is lost?" he asked. Then in the course of conversation he related that a ray of light has been found which, when projected, does not reveal the operator but enables him

to witness the scene. So it is with Siddhas. They are only pure light and can see others, whereas they cannot be seen by others. For example, Prabhulinga, while touring in the North, came across Goraknath. The latter displayed his yogic powers, e.g., when his arm was cut by a sword, the sword was blunted without inflicting injury on him. This is making the body proof against injury (*kāyasiddhi*). Prabhulinga offered himself to be cut. When the sword was thrust, it passed through and through his body as if it was air and there was no injury on the body. Gorak was astonished and offered himself as the disciple of Prabhulinga.

Again, there was a dialogue between Siva and Parvati in Kailas. Siva said that Allama was one who would not be affected by Her blandishments. Parvati wanted to try it and so sent Her tamasic quality to incarnate as a king's daughter on the Earth in order that she might entice Allama. She grew up as a highly accomplished girl. She used to sing in the temple. Allama used to go there and play on the drum. She lost herself in the play of the drum. She fell in love with him. They met in her bedroom. When she embraced him he became intangible. She grew lovesick. But a celestial damsel was sent to remind her of her purpose on the Earth. She resolved to overthrow Allama but did not succeed. Finally she went up to Kailas. Then Parvati sent Her *satvic* quality who was born as a Brahmin Sanyasini. When she surrendered to Prabhulinga she realised his true greatness.

Sri Bhagavan spoke very appreciatively of Nayana, *i.e.*, Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni, for about an hour, how he wrote "*Uma Sahasram*" and "*Hara Sahasram*", how he taught his students, how he engaged in dispute with Bhattasri Narayana Sastri, how meek and humble he was though so learned and capable, etc.

Sri Bhagavan related how Nakkirar, a Sanga Pulavar (Poet), faced the wrath of Siva on questioning some composition of Siva in Tamil, how he was taken captive by a spirit and afterwards released.

Nakkirar was doing *tapas* on the bank of a *tirtha.* A leaf fell down from a tree; half the leaf touched the water and the other half was on the ground. Suddenly the water-half became a fish and the land-half became a bird. Each of them was united to the other by the leaf and struggled to go into its own element. Nakkirar was watching it in wonder and suddenly a spirit came down from above and carried him away to a cave where were already 999 captives all of whom were *tapo bhrashta* (those who had fallen away from their austerities).

D.: Was Nakkirar a *tapobhrashta*?

M.: Yes. While engaged in contemplation why did he fall away from contemplation and take to watching the mysterious happening in front of him?

He continued to say how Nakkirar composed "*Tirumuruhatruppadai*", and obtained the release of all the thousand prisoners.

21st January, 1937

335. *D.*: How will the sexual impulse cease to be?

M.: When differentiation ceases.

D.: How can it be effected?

M.: The other sex and its relation are only mental concepts. The Upanishad says that all are dear because the Self is beloved of all. One's happiness is within; the love is of the Self only. It is only within; do not think it to be without; then differentiation ceases to operate.

22nd January, 1937

336. A certain Vaisya who seems to have studied the Upanishads and Srimad Bhagavad Gita asked some questions :

D. : How to realise the Self ?

M. : The Self is always directly perceived. There is no moment when it is not so. How then is it to be ascertained ? Find out the Self. You are that.

D. : But it is said the heart-knots are cut away and all doubts end when the Supreme is found. The word "*drishti*" is used.

M. : To be the Self is the same as seeing the Self. There are no two selves for the one to see the other.

Later, he continued the same question of investigation of the Self.

D. : How to realise the Self ?

M. : It is already realised. One should know this simple fact. That is all.

D. : But I do not know it. How shall I know it ?

M. : Do you deny your existence ?

D. : No ; how can that be done ?

M. : Then the truth is admitted.

D. : Yet, I do not see. How shall I realise the Self ?

M. : Find out who says 'I'.

D. : Yes. I say 'I'.

M. : Who is this 'I' ? Is it the body or some one besides the body ?

D. : It is not the body. It is some one besides it.

M. : Find it out.

D. : I am unable to do it. How shall I find it ?

M. : You are now aware of the body. You were not aware of the body in deep sleep. Still you remained in sleep. After waking up you hold the body and say "I cannot realise the Self". Did you say so in your sleep ?

Because you were undivided (*akhanda*) then, you did not say so. Now that you are contracted within the limits of the body you say "I have not realised". Why do you limit your Self and then feel miserable ? Be of your true nature and happy. You did not say 'I' in sleep. You say so now. Why ? Because you hold to the body. Find out wherefrom this 'I' comes. Then the Self is realised.

The body being insentient cannot say 'I'. The Self being infinite cannot say 'I' either. Who then says 'I'?

D. : I do not yet understand. How to find the 'I' ?

M. : Find out wherefrom this 'I' arises. Then this 'I' will disappear and the infinite Self will remain. This 'I' is only the knot between the sentient and the insentient. The body is not 'I', the Self is not 'I'. Who, then, is the 'I' ? Wherefrom does it arise ?

D. : Wherefrom *does* it arise ?

M. : Find out.

D. : I do not know. Please enlighten me.

M. : It is not from without. It is from within. Where does it come from ? If elsewhere you can be led there. Being within you must find it out yourself.

D. : From the head ?

M. : Does the concept of 'head' arise after the 'I' or does 'I' arise from the head ? If 'I' be in the head why do you bend it when sleep overpowers you ? 'I' is ever constant. So also must its seat be. If the head bends at one time and is erect at another time how can it be the seat of 'I' ? Your head is laid flat in sleep. When awake it is raised up. Can it be the 'I' ?

D. : Which is it then ?

M. : 'I' comes from within. When asleep there is no 'I'. Just before waking there is 'I'-thought.

D. : The heart-knot is said to be between the eyebrows.

M. : Some say "between the eyebrows"; others, "at the coccyx", and so on. All these are from the standpoint of the body.

The body comes after the 'I'-thought.

D. : But I cannot divest myself of the body.

M. : So you admit that you are not the body.

D. : If there is pain in this body, I feel it; but not if another body is injured. I cannot get over this body.

M. : This identity is the cause of such feeling. That is the *hrdaya granthi* (heart-knot).

D. : How is this knot to go?

M. : For whom is the knot? Why do you want it to go? Does it ask or do you ask?

D. : It cannot ask; I am asking.

M. : Who is that 'I'? If that is found the knot will not remain.

D. : The knot is concomitant with the body. The body is due to birth. How is rebirth to cease?

M. : Who is born? Is the Self born? Or is it the body?

D. : It is the body.

M. : Then let the body ask how its rebirth may cease.

D. : It will not ask. So I am asking.

M. : Whose is the body? You were without it in your deep sleep. After the 'I'-thought arose the body arose. The first birth is that of 'I'-thought. The body has its birth subsequent to 'I'-thought. So its birth is secondary. Get rid of the primary cause and the secondary one will disappear by itself.

D. : How is that 'I'-thought to be checked from rising?

M.: By Self-quest.

D.: I try to understand but without success. Can I find the Self by means of *japa?* If so, please tell me how.

M.: What *japa?* Why should you make artificial *japa?* You can find out the eternal and natural *japa* always going on within you.

D. Some Upadesh will probably help me.

M.: If I say "Do—Rama, Rama" to one who has not struggled through books like you, he will do it and stick to it. If I say so to one like you who have read much and are investigating matters, you will not do it for long, because you will think, "Why should I do it? Above all, who am I that should be repeating the *mantra?* Let me find who I am before I proceed further"; and so you will stop *japa* and begin investigation.

D.: It is said: The senses are out-going (*parānchikāni*); inward turned (is) sight (*avrittachakshuh*). What is *avrittachakshuh* (inward-turned sight)?

M.: It does not mean replacement of the eyeball in the opposite direction. What is *chakshuh?*

D.: The eye.

M.: Does the eye see or any one behind it? If the eye could see does a corpse see? The one who is behind the eye sees through the eye. He is meant by the word "*chakshuh*".

D.: *Divya chakshuh* is necessary to see the glory of God. This physical eye is the ordinary *chakshuh.*

M.: Oh! I see. You want to see Million-Sun-Splendour and the rest of it!

D.: Can we not see the glory as Million-Sun-Splendour?

M.: Can you see the single Sun? Why do you ask for millions of suns?

D. : It must be possible to do so by divine sight. "Where the Sun shines not, etc. That is My Supreme abode." Therefore there is a state where this Sun is powerless. That state is that of God.

M. : All right. Find Krishna and the problem is solved.

D. : Krishna is not alive.

M. : Is that what you have learnt from the Gita? Does he not say that He is eternal? Of what are you thinking, His body?

D. : He taught others while alive. Those around Him must have realised. I seek a similar living Guru.

M. : Is Gita then useless after He withdrew His body? Did He speak of His body as Krishna?

"*Natwewāham jātunāsam* . . . ." ("Never I was not" . . . .)

D. : But I want a living Guru who can say the truth first hand.

M. : The fate of the Guru will be similar to the fate of Krishna.

The questioner retired. Later, Sri Bhagavan said: Divine sight means Self-luminosity. The word *divya* shows it. The full word means the Self. Who is to bestow a divine eye? And who is to see? Again, people read in the books, "hearing, reflection and one-pointedness are necessary." They think that they must pass through *Savikalpa samādhi* and *Nirvikalpa samādhi* before attaining Realisation. Hence all these questions. Why should they wander in that maze? What do they gain at the end? It is only cessation of the trouble of seeking. They find that the Self is eternal and self-evident. Why should they not get that repose even this moment?

A simple man, not learned, is satisfied with *japa* or worship. A *jnāni* is of course satisfied. The whole trouble is for the book-worms. Well, well. They will also get on.

337. *Mr. K. R. V. Iyer*: How is the mind to be purified ?

M.: The sāstras say: "By *karma, bhakti* and so on". My attendant asked the same question once before. He was told, "By *karma* dedicated to God." It is not enough that one thinks of God while doing the *karma,* but one must continually and unceasingly think of Him. Then alone will the mind become pure.

The attendant applies it to himself and says, "It is not enough that I serve Sri Bhagavan physically. But I must unceasingly remember Him."

To another person, who asked the same question, Bhagavan said: Quest of the Self, meaning, 'I am-the-body' idea must vanish. (*Ātma vichāra*=disappearance of *dehātma buddhi.*)

23rd January, 1937

338. Mrs. Jennings, an American lady, asked a few questions:

D.: Is not affirmation of God more effective than the quest, "Who am I ?" Affirmation is positive, whereas the other is negation. Moreover, it indicates separateness.

M.: So long as you seek to know how to realise, this advice is given to find your Self. Your seeking the method denotes your separateness.

D.: Is it not better to say 'I am the Supreme Being' than ask 'Who am I ?'

M.: Who affirms ? There must be one to do it. Find that one.

D.: Is not meditation better than investigation ?

M.: Meditation implies mental imagery, whereas investigation is for the Reality. The former is objective, whereas the latter is subjective.

D.: There must be a scientific approach to this subject.

M.: To eschew unreality and seek the Reality is scientific.

D.: I mean there must be a gradual elimination, first of the mind, then of the intellect, then of the ego.

M.: The Self alone is Real. All others are unreal. The mind and intellect do not remain apart from you.

The Bible says, "Be still and know that I am God." Stillness is the sole requisite for the realisation of the Self as God.

D.: Will the West ever understand this teaching?

M.: There is no question of time and space. Understanding depends on ripeness of mind. What does it matter if one lives in the East or in the West?

Sri Bhagavan referred the lady to a few stanzas in "*Truth Revealed*" and to "*Thāyumānavar*". She retired.

Later Sri Bhagavan said the whole Vedanta is contained in the two Biblical statements:

"I am that I AM" and "Be still and know that I am God."

Mr. K. S. N. Iyer, a Railway Officer, said to Sri Bhagavan that the compiler of "*Cosmic Consciousness*" considers realisation to be possible only within certain limits of age in an individual's life.

M.: Does any one say "I must come into being before or after some age"? He is here and now. Statements like this are misleading because people come to believe that they cannot realise the Self in this incarnation and must needs take chances in another. It is all absurd.

339. With regard to *Siva Visishtādvaita,* (*i.e., Saiva Siddhānta*), Sri Bhagavan said: *Garudoham bhāvana,* 'I am Garuda'—conception does not make a *garuda* of a man. All the same the poisonous effects of snake-bite are cured. Similarly with (*Sivoham bhāvana*) 'I-am-Siva' conception also. One is not transformed into Siva, but the ruinous effects of the ego are put an end to. Or the person retains his individuality but remains pure, *i.e.,* fit for constituting a part of the body of Siva. Becoming so he can enjoy the Supreme Bliss. That is liberation—say the *Saiva Siddhāntis.* This simply betrays the love of their individuality and is in no way the true experience of liberation.

340. Mr. Bose began, "After the return of body-consciousness....."

M.: What is body-consciousness? Tell us that first. Who are you apart from consciousness? Body is found because there is body-consciousness which arises from 'I'-consciousness which again rises from consciousness.

Consciousness → 'I'-consciousness → body-consciousness → body.

There is always consciousness and nothing but that. What you are now considering to be body-consciousness is due to superimposition. If there is only consciousness and nothing but it, the meaning of the Scripture *Atmanastu kāmāya sarvam priyobhavati*—("All are dear because of the love of the Self")—becomes clear.

A question arises, why there should be suicides in that case. Why does one do it? Because he is unhappy and desires to put an end to his unhappiness. He actually does it by ending the association with the body which represents all unhappiness. For there must be a killer to kill the body. He is the survivor after suicide. That is the Self.

341. *Mrs. Jennings:* Sri Bhagavan says that the state of Realisation is freedom from the tyranny of thoughts. Have not the thoughts got a place in the scheme of things —maybe on a lower plane?

M.: The thoughts arise from the 'I'-thought which in its turn arises from the Self. Therefore the Self manifests as 'I' and other thoughts. What does it matter if there are thoughts or no thoughts?

D.: Are good thoughts helpful for Realisation? Are they not authentic *via media*, a lower rung of the ladder, to Realisation?

M.: Yes,—this way. They keep off bad thoughts. They must themselves disappear before the state of Realisation.

D.: But are not creative thoughts an aspect of Realisation and therefore helpful?

M.: Helpful only in the way said before. They must all disappear in the Self. Thoughts, good or bad, take you farther and not nearer, because the Self is more intimate than thoughts. You are Self, whereas the thoughts are alien to the Self.

D.: So the Self finally absorbs its own creation which had helped its Realisation. Whereas civilisation wrongly worships and so separates and "short-circuits" its own creations which had helped its advance.

M.: Are you not distinct from thoughts? Do you not exist without them? But can the thoughts exist without you?

D.: Is civilisation generally, slowly but surely, advancing in the right direction towards this Self-Realisation?

M.: Civilisation is in the order of things. It will finally resolve itself—as all others—in the Realisation of the Self.

D.: Is a fine type of primitive man nearer to Realisation than a civilised man governed by intellect and thought?

M.: A realised man may look a savage, but a savage is not a realised man.

D.: Is it right to think that *all* that happens to us are God's ordainment, and therefore only good?

M.: Of course it is. Yet all others and God are not apart from the Self. How can their thoughts arise when you remain as the Self?

D.: Is "surrender" accepting all physical annoyances as ants, mosquitos, snakes, etc., and, in accepting, willing or ceasing to be really hurt by them.

M.: Whatever it is, is it apart from you, the seer or the thinker?

A Parsi lady from the audience intervened: If they are not apart, do we not feel the sting of the ants?

M.: Whom does the ant sting? It is the body. You are not the body. So long as you identify yourself with the body, you see the ants, plants, etc. If you remain as the Self, there are not others apart from the Self.

D.: The body feels the pain of the sting.

M.: If the body feels it, let it ask. Let the body take care of itself. How does it matter to you?

The American lady again: Does complete surrender mean that all noise and disturbance in our environment, even during meditation, must be accepted? Or should we seek a cave in a mountain for solitude? Did not Bhagavan do this?

M.: There is no going or returning. The Self is said to be unaffected by the elements, infinite, eternal. It cannot move. There is no place to move in for the Self.

D.: But, in the process of finding the Self, is this seeking external help spiritually legitimate?

M. : The error lies in the identification of the Self with the body. If Bhagavan is the body you may ask that body. But understand him whom you address as Bhagavan. He is not the body. He is the Self.

Then she referred to an article in "*Harijan*" where it is said that everything is God and nothing belongs to the individual, and so on.

M. : Everything, the individual, God and all are only the Self.

D. then read some lines from Shelly and asked if Shelley was not a realised soul.

Within a cavern of man's trackless spirit
Is throned an Image so intensely fair
That the adventurous thoughts that wander near it
Worship, and as they kneel, tremble and wear
The splendour of its presence, and the light
Penetrates their dreamlike frame
Till they become charged with the strength of flame.

M. : Yes. The lines are excellent. He must have realised what he wrote.

The lady then thanked Sri Bhagavan and retired.

342. At 11 p.m. in the night a group of Andhras came from Guntur, consisting of a middle-aged woman with a sad but firm look, her mother and two men. They requested audience with Sri Bhagavan.

The woman said to Sri Bhagavan :

"When my son was in the womb my husband died. The son was born posthumous. He grew up all right for five years. Then he was attacked by infantile paralysis. When nine he was bedridden. Nevertheless he was bright and cheerful. For two years he was in that condition and now they say that he is dead. I know that he is only sleeping and will awake soon. When they said that he had collapsed I was shocked. I saw in a vision a Sadhu who appeared to pass his hands over the child's body and the child awoke refreshed. I believe that Sadhu is yourself. Please come and touch the boy so that he may get up," she prayed.

Sri Bhagavan asked what the doctor said.

She replied, "They say that he is dead. But what do they know? I have brought the boy all the way from Guntur to this place."

Someone asked: "How? Is the corpse brought here?"

She: They said that the corpse would be taken by paying special rates at ½ rupee per mile. We have paid Rs. 150 for it, and brought it as luggage.

M.: If your vision be correct the boy will wake up to-morrow.

She: Please touch him. May I bring him into the compound?

The others protested and persuaded them to leave.

They left and the next morning the corpse was reported to have been cremated.

When asked, Sri Bhagavan said: It is said of some saints that they revived the dead. They, too, did not revive all the dead. If that could be done there will be no world, no death, no cemetery, etc.

One man asked: The mother's faith was very remarkable. How could she have had such a hopeful vision and still be disappointed? Can it be a superimposition attendant on her child's love?

M.: She and her child not being real, how can the vision alone be a superimposition?

D.: Then how is it to be explained?

No answer.

343. *D.:* Even as the hand is cut off, one must remain unaware of it because Srimad Gita declares that the Self is different from the body.

M. : Does *jnāna* consist in being unaware of the pain of injury ?

D. : Should he not remain unaware of pain ?

M. : Major operations are performed under anaesthetics, keeping the patient unaware of the pain. Does the patient gain *jnāna,* too, at the same time ? Insensibility to pain cannot be *jnāna.*

D. : Should not a *jnāni* (a sage) be insensible to pain ?

M. : Physical pain only follows body-consciousness ; it cannot be in the absence of body-consciousness. Mind, being unaware of the body, cannot be aware of its pains or pleasures. Read the story of Indra and Ahalya in "*Yoga Vasishta*" ; there death itself is said to be an act of mind.

Pains are dependent on the ego ; they cannot be without the 'I', but 'I' can remain without them.

344. *D.* : "*Vichāra Sāgara*" relates four obstacles to Self-Realisation.

M. : Why only four ? Some say they are nine. Sleep is one of them. What is sleep ? It is only the obverse of waking. It cannot be independent of waking. Sleep is unalloyed Self. Do not think you are awake ; sleep cannot be, nor the three states either. Only forgetting the Self you say you dreamt. Can anything exist in the absence of the Self ? Why do you leave it out and hold the non-self ?

As the mind tends to go out turn it inwards then and there. It goes out owing to the habit of looking for happiness outside oneself ; but the knowledge that the external objects are not the cause of happiness will keep it in check. This is *vairāgya* or dispassion. Only after perfect *vairāgya* the mind becomes steady.

The mind is only a mixture of knowledge and ignorance or of sleep and waking. It functions in five ways:

Kshipta (active);
Moodha (dull);
Vikshipta (distracted);
Kashaya (latent); and
Ekāgriya (one-pointed).

Of these *kashaya* is only the latency of tendencies and not the tendencies themselves such as attachment, repulsion, etc.

Yourself being *ānanda* (Bliss), why should you enjoy it saying, "Aha! How blissful!" This is *rasasvada.*

During the marriage ceremonies a virgin feels happy as a bride without experiencing the embrace of man; this is *rasasvada.*

D.: *Jivanmukti* (liberated while alive) itself being *ānanda*......

Sri Bhagavan interrupted: Do not look for *sastras.* What is *Jivanmukti?* What is *ānanda?* Liberation itself is in doubt. What are all these words? Can they be independent of the Self?

D.: Only we have no experience of all this.

M.: What is not, is always lost; what is, is ever present, here and now. This is the eternal order of things. Example: necklace round the neck.

345. Sri Bhagavan continued, after interval: Destroy the power of mind by seeking it. When the mind is examined its activities cease automatically.

Looking for the source of mind is another method. The source may be said to be God or Self or consciousness.

Concentrating on one thought, all other thoughts disappear; finally that thought also disappears. It is necessary to be *aware* while controlling thoughts, otherwise it will lead to sleep.

D.: How to seek the mind?

M.: Breath-control may do as an aid but can never lead to the goal itself. While doing it mechanically, take care to be alert in mind and remember the 'I'-thought and seek its source. Then you will find that where breath sinks, there the 'I'-thought arises. They sink and rise together. The 'I'-thought also will sink along with breath. Simultaneously another luminous and infinite "I—I" will manifest and it will be continuous and unbroken. That is the goal. It goes by different names—God, Self, *Kundalini—Sakti*, consciousness, etc., etc.

When the attempt is made it will of itself take you to the goal.

346. Free will and Destiny last as long as the body lasts. But wisdom transcends both, for the Self is beyond knowledge and ignorance.

347. The mind is a bundle of thoughts. The thoughts arise because there is the thinker. The thinker is the ego. The ego, if sought, will automatically vanish. The ego and the mind are the same. The ego is the root-thought from which all other thoughts arise.

348. *D.:* There are times when persons and things take on a vague, almost transparent, form as in a dream. One ceases to observe them as from outside, but is passively conscious of their existence, while not actively conscious of any kind of selfhood. There is a deep quietness in the mind. Is it, at such times, ready to dive into the Self? Or is this condition unhealthy, the result of self-hypnotism? Should it be encouraged as a means of getting temporary peace?

M.: There is consciousness along with quietness in the mind; this is exactly the state to be aimed at. The fact that the question has been framed on this point, without realising that it is the Self, shows that the state is not steady but casual.

The word 'diving' is appropriate to the state of outgoing tendencies when the mind is to be diverted and turned within, so as to dive below the surface of externalities. But when deep quietness prevails without obstructing the consciousness, where is the need to dive? If the state be not realised as the Self, the effort to do so may be called 'diving'. The state may in that way be said to be suitable for realisation or 'diving'. Thus the last two questions in the paragraph are unnecessary.

D.: The mind continues to feel partial towards children, possibly because of the form sometimes used to personify the Ideal. How can this preference be outgrown?

M.: Hold the Self. Why think of children and reactions towards them?

D.: This third visit to Tiruvannamalai seems to have intensified the sense of egoism in me and made meditation less easy. Is this an unimportant passing phase or a sign that I should avoid such places hereafter?

M.: It is imaginary. This place or another is within you. Such imaginations must end so that the places have nothing to do with the activities of the mind. Even your surroundings are not of your own accord; they are there as a matter of course. You must rise above them and not get yourself involved.

349. SRI SANKARA'S PATH TO SALVATION THROUGH DISCRIMINATION

A NOTE BY SRI MAHARSHI

(In the current issue of "*The Vision*" is published the following note, being the translation by Mr. S. Krishna, M.A., of Sri Ramana Maharshi's preface to his translation of Sri Sankara's "*Viveka Chudamani*" or "Crown-gem of Discrimination".)

Every being in the world yearns to be always happy, free from the taint of sorrow ; and desires to get rid of bodily ailments which are not of his true nature. Further, every one cherishes the greatest love for himself : and this love is not possible in the absence of happiness. In deep sleep, though devoid of everything, one has the experience of being happy. Yet, due to the ignorance of the real nature of one's own being, which is happiness itself, people flounder in the vast ocean of material existence forsaking the right path that leads to happiness and act under the mistaken belief that the way to be happy consists in obtaining the pleasures of this and the other world.

A Safe Guide : But alas, that happiness which has not the taint of sorrow is not realised. It is precisely for the purpose of pointing out the straight path to happiness that God Siva took on the guise of Sri Sankaracharya, wrote the commentaries on the Triune Institutes (*Prasthana Traya*) of the Vedanta, which extol the excellence of this bliss ; and demonstrated it by his own example in life. These commentaries, however, are of little use to those ardent seekers who are intent upon realising the bliss of absolution, but have not the scholarship for studying them.

It is for such as these that Sri Sankara revealed the essence of the commentaries in this short treatise, "The Crown-gem of Discrimination", explaining in detail the points that have to be grasped by those who seek absolution, and thereby directing them to the true and straight path.

Learning Won't Do : Sri Sankara opens the theme by observing that it is hard indeed to attain human birth, and one should (having attained it) strive from the realisation of the bliss of liberation, which is verily the nature of one's being. By *Jnāna* or Knowledge alone is this bliss realised, and *Jnāna* is achieved only through *Vichāra* or steady enquiry. In order to know this method of enquiry, says Sri Sankara, one should seek the favour of a Guru, and proceeds to describe the qualities of the Guru and his Sishya and how the latter should approach and serve his master. He further emphasises that in order to realise the bliss of liberation one's own individual effort is an essential factor. Mere book-learning never yields this bliss which can be realised only through enquiry or *Vichāra,* which consists of *Sravana* or devoted attention to the precepts of the Guru, *Manana* or deep contemplation and *Nididhyāsana* or the cultivation of steady poise in the Self.

THE THREE PATHS : The three bodies—physical, subtle and causal—are non-self and are unreal. The Self, or "I", is quite different from them. It is due to ignorance that the sense of the Self or the 'I' notion is foisted on that which is not Self, and this indeed is bondage. Since from ignorance arises bondage, from Knowledge ensues liberation. To know this from the Guru is *Sravana.*

To reject the three bodies consisting of the five sheaths (physical, vital, mental, gnostic and delectant) as not 'I' and to extract through subtle enquiry of "Who am I ?"—even as the central blade of grass is delicately drawn out from its whorl—that which is different from all the three bodies and is existent as one and universal in the heart as *Aham* or 'I' and denoted by the word *Tvam* (in the Scriptural dictum, '*Tat-tvam asi*', That thou art). This process of subtle enquiry is *Manana* or deep contemplation.

THE BEATITUDE : The world of name and form is but an adjunct of *Sat* or Brahman, and being not different from it is rejected as such and is affirmed as nothing else but Brahman. The instruction by the Guru to the disciple of the *Mahavakya, "Tat-tvam-asi"*, which declares the identity of the Self and the Supreme, is Upadesa. The disciple is then enjoined to remain in the beatitude of *Aham-Brahman*—'I' the Absolute. Nevertheless the old tendencies of the mind sprout up thick and strong and form an obstruction (to that state of beatitude). These tendencies are threefold; and egoism, which is their root, flourishes in the externalised and differentiating consciousness caused by the forces of *Vikshepa* or dissipation (due to *Rajas*) and *Āvarana* or envelopment (due to *Tamas*).

CHURNING THE MIND: To instal the mind firmly in the heart until these forces are destroyed and to awaken with unswerving, ceaseless vigilance the true and cognate tendency which is characteristic of the Atman and is expressed by the dicta, "*Aham Brahmāsmi*" (I am Brahman), and "*Brahmaivāham*" (Brahman alone am I) is termed *Nididhyāsana* or *Ātmanusandhāna, i.e.*, constancy in the Self. This is otherwise called Bhakti, Yoga and Dhyāna.

Ātmanusandhāna has been likened to churning the curd to draw forth butter, the mind being compared to the churning rod, the heart to the curd and the practice of constancy in the Self to the process of churning. Just as by churning the curd butter is extracted and by friction fire is kindled, even so, by unswerving vigilant constancy in the Self, ceaseless like the unbroken filamentary flow of oil, is generated the natural or changeless trance or *Nirvikalpa Samādhi,* which readily and spontaneously yields that direct, immediate, unobstructed and universal perception of Brahman, which is at once Knowledge and Experience and which transcends time and space.

LIMITLESS BLISS: This is Self-Realisation; and thereby is cut asunder the *Hridaya-Granthi* or the Knot of the Heart. The false delusions of ignorance, the vicious and age-long tendencies of the mind, which constitute this knot, are destroyed. All doubts are dispelled and the bondage of Karma is severed.

Thus has Sri Sankara described, in this "Crown-gem of Discrimination," *Samādhi* or trance transcendent, which is the limitless bliss of liberation, beyond doubt and duality, and has at the same time indicated the means for its attainment. To realise this state of freedom from duality is the *summum bonum* of life : and he alone that has won it is a *Jivanmukta* (the liberated one while yet alive), and not he who has merely a theoretical understanding of what constitutes *Purushārtha* or the desired end and aim of human endeavour.

FINAL FREEDOM : Thus defining a Jivanmukta, he is declared to be free from the bonds of three-fold Karmas (*Sanchita, Āgāmi* and *Prārabdha*). The disciple who has reached this stage then relates his personal experience. The liberated one is free indeed to act as he pleases, and when he leaves the mortal frame, attains absolution, and returns not to this "birth which is death."

Sri Sankara thus describes Realisation that connotes liberation as two-fold, *i.e., Jivanmukti* and *Videha Mukti* referred to above. Moreover, in this short treatise, written in the form of a dialogue between a Guru and his disciple, he has considered many relevant topics.

6th February, 1937

350. While speaking to Mr. G. Shanmugham, a very sincere lawyer devotee, Bhagavan observed :

The Sastras say that one must serve a Guru for 12 years for getting Self-Realisation. What does Guru do ? Does he hand it over to the disciple ? Is not the Self always realised ? What does the common belief mean then ? The man is always the Self and yet he does not know it. He confounds it with the non-self, viz. the body etc. Such confusion is due to ignorance. If ignorance be wiped out the confusion will cease to exist and the true knowledge will be unfolded. By remaining in contact with realised sages the man gradually loses the ignorance until its removal is complete. The eternal Self is thus revealed.

This is the meaning conveyed by the story of Ashtāvakra and Janaka. The anecdotes differ in different books. We are not concerned with the names and the embellishments. The *tatva,* i.e. the moral, must not be lost sight of. The disciple surrenders himself to the master. That means there is no vestige of individuality retained by the disciple. If the surrender is complete all sense of individuality is lost and there is thus no cause of misery. The eternal being is only happiness. That is revealed.

Without understanding it aright, people think that the Guru teaches the disciple something like "*TATVAMASI*" and that the disciple realises "I am Brahman". In their ignorance they conceive of Brahman as something more huge and powerful than anything else. With a limited 'I' the man is so stuck up and wild. What will be the case if the same 'I' grows up enormous? He will be enormously ignorant and foolish! This false 'I' must perish. Its annihilation is the fruit of *Guru Seva.* Realisation is eternal and it is not newly brought about by the Guru. He helps in the removal of ignorance. That is all.

7th February, 1937

351. Doctor Subramania Iyer, Retired Health Officer of Salem, read out a passage which contained the instructions that one should know that the world is transitory, that worldly enjoyments are useless, that one should therefore turn away in disgust from them, restrain the senses and meditate on the Self to realise it.

Sri Bhagavan observed: How does one know the world to be transitory? Unless something permanent is held, the transitory nature of the world cannot be understood. Because the man is already the Self, and the Self is the Eternal Reality, his attention is drawn to it; and he is instructed to rivet his attention on the Eternal Reality, the Self.

THE DIFFERENT CREEDS.

352. The 'I' thought rises up as the subject and object. 'I' alone being held, all else disappears. It is enough, but only to the competent few.

The others argue, "Quite so. The world that exists in my sleep has existed before my birth and will exist after my death. Do not others see it? How can the world cease to be if my ego appears not?" The genesis of the world and the different schools of thought are meant to satisfy such people.

D.: Nevertheless, being only products of intellect they cannot turn the mind inward.

M.: Just for this reason the scriptures speak of "in-turned look", "one-pointed look" and so on.

The Self being always the Self, why should only a *dhira* be illumined? Does it mean a man of courage? No; *dhih* = intellect; *rah* = watch; protection. So *dhira* is the one who always keeps the mind inward bent without letting it loose.

8th February, 1937

353. *D.*: What is *turiya*?

M.: There are three states only, the waking, dream and sleep. *Turiya* is not a fourth one; it is what underlies these three. But people do not readily understand it. Therefore it is said that this is the fourth state and the only Reality. In fact it is not apart from anything, for it forms the substratum of all happenings; it is the only Truth; it is your very Being. The three states appear as fleeting phenomena on it and then sink into it alone. Therefore they are unreal.

The pictures in a cinema show are only shadows passing over the screen. They make their appearance; move forward and backward; change from one to another; are therefore unreal, whereas the screen all along remains unchanged. Similarly with paintings: the images are unreal and the canvas real. So also with us: the world-phenomena, within or without, are only passing phenomena not independent of our Self. Only the habit of looking on them as being real and located outside ourselves is responsible for hiding our true being and showing forth the others. The ever-present only Reality, the Self, being found, all other unreal things will disappear, leaving behind the knowledge that they are no other than the Self.

Turiya is only another name for the Self. Aware of the waking, dream and sleep states, we remain unaware of our own Self. Nevertheless the Self is here and now, it is the only Reality. There is nothing else. So long as identification with the body lasts the world seems to lie outside us. Only realise the Self, and they *are not.*

354. An American lady, a theosophist, asked: What is the means by which my approach to my master may be made nearer?

M.: How far away are you now from him?

D.: I am away from him. But I want to get closer to him.

M.: If you first know your Self, you may then find out how far away the other is. Who are you now? Are you the personality?

D.: Yes, I am the personality.

M.: Is the personality independent of the Self?

D.: Sometimes.

M.: At what times?

D.: I mean I have some flashes of the reality and, at other times, I do not have them.

M.: Who is aware of those flashes?

D.: I, I mean my personality.

M.: Is this personality aware as being apart from the Self?

D.: Which Self?

M.: Which do you consider the personality to be?

D.: The lower self.

M.: Then I mean to ask if the lower self is aware independently of the Higher Self?

D.: Yes, at times.

M.: Who feels that she is away from the master, just now?

D.: The Higher Self.

M.: Does the Higher Self have a body and say that the master is away from it? Does it speak through your mouth? Are you apart from that?

D.: Can you kindly advise me how I can train myself to be aware of what I do even without the body, as in sleep?

M.: Awareness is your nature. In deep sleep or in waking, it is the same. How can it be gained afresh?

D.: But I do not remember what and how I did in my sleep.

M.: Who says "I do not remember"?

D.: I say now.

M.: You were the same then; why do you not say so in sleep?

D.: I do not remember what I say in sleep.

M.: You say, "I know, I remember," in the wakeful state. This same personality says, "I did not know.

—I did not remember in sleep". Why does not this question arise in sleep?

D.: I do not know what happens in sleep. That is the reason I ask now.

M.: The question affects the sleeping phase and must be raised there. It does not affect the waking phase and there is no apparent reason for this question.

The fact is that you have no limitations in sleep and no question arises. Whereas now you put on limitations, identify yourself with the body and questions of this kind arise.

D.: I understand it, but do not realise it (i.e. unity in variety).

M.: Because you are in variety, you say you understand unity—that you have flashes, etc., remember things, etc.; you consider this variety to be real. On the other hand Unity is the reality, and the variety is false. This variety must go before unity reveals itself—its reality. It is always real. It does not send flashes of its being in this false variety. On the contrary, this variety obstructs the truth.

Then some others pursued the conversation.

M.: Removal of ignorance is the aim of practice, and not acquisition of Realisation. Realisation is ever present, here and now. Were it to be acquired anew, Realisation must be understood to be absent at one time and present at another time. In that case, it is not permanent, and therefore not worth the attempt. But Realisation is permanent and eternal and is here and now.

D.: Grace is necessary for the removal of ignorance.

M.: Certainly. But Grace is all along there. Grace is the Self. It is not something to be acquired. All that is necessary is to know Its existence. For example, the sun is brightness only. He does not see darkness.

Whereas others speak of darkness flying away on the sun approaching. Similarly, ignorance also is a phantom and not real. Because of its unreality, its unreal nature being found, it is said to be removed.

Again, the sun is there and also bright. You are surrounded by sunlight. Still if you would know the sun you must turn your eyes in his direction and look at him. So also Grace is found by practice alone although it is here and now.

D.: By the desire to surrender constantly, increasing Grace is experienced, I hope.

M.: Surrender once for all and be done with the desire. So long as the sense of doership is retained there is the desire; that is also personality. If this goes the Self is found to shine forth pure.

The sense of doership is the bondage and not the actions themselves.

"Be still and know that I am God." Here stillness is total surrender without a vestige of individuality. Stillness will prevail and there will be no agitation of mind. Agitation of mind is the cause of desire, the sense of doership, personality. If that is stopped there is quiet. There 'Knowing' means 'Being'. It is not the relative knowledge involving the triads, knowledge, subject and object.

D.: Is the thought "I am God" or "I am the Supreme Being" helpful?

M.: "I am that I am." *"I am"* is God—not thinking, "I am God". Realise *"I am"* and do not think *I am.* "Know I am God"—it is said, and not "Think I am God."

Later Sri Bhagavan continued: It is said "I AM that I AM." That means a person must abide as the 'I'. He is always the 'I' alone. He is nothing else. Yet he asks "Who am I ?" A victim of illusion would ask "Who am I ?" and not a man fully aware of himself. The wrong identity of the Self with the non-self makes you ask, "Who am I ?"

Later still : There are different routes to Tiruvannamalai, but Tiruvannamalai is the same by whichever route it is gained. Similarly the approach to the subject varies according to the personality. Yet the Self is the same. But still, being in Tiruvannamalai, if one asks for the route it is ridiculous. So also, being the Self, if one asks how to realise the Self it looks absurd. You are the Self. Remain as the Self. That is all. The questions arise because of the present wrong identification of the Self with the body. That is ignorance. This must go. On its removal the Self alone *is*.

355. *D.* : Does not education make a sage more useful to the world than illiteracy ?

M. : Even a learned man must bow before the illiterate sage.

Illiteracy is ignorance; education is learned ignorance. Both of them are ignorant of their true aim; whereas a sage is not ignorant because there is no aim for him.

356. *D.* : Why should there be sleep in the world ?

M. : Owing to sin only.

D. : Can it be destroyed ?

M. : Yes.

D. : It ends only after making itself felt, they say.

M. : Why then devotion to God ?

D. : How can sleep be destroyed ?

M. : Be not aware of its activities and effects.

D. : How can it be done ?

M. : Only by enquiry of the Self.

REMINISCENCES.

357. *M.:* Sri Bhagavan was recounting some of the incidents of His stay in Tiruvannamalai.

1. He was one day given a small speck of some substance on a leaf, to be licked off. It was said to be a good help for digestion. He licked it. Later He had His meal. After sometime, the assembled persons appeared to be surrounded by Light (*Tejomaya*). The experience passed away after some time.

2. While He was living in Pavalakunru He intended to have a bath in one of the rills on the hillside. Palaniswami was informed of it. The news spread, that Jada Padmanabhaswami, who was living on the Hill, had arranged with Palaniswami to take Sri Bhagavan to the hill near his cottage. Palaniswami, without informing Sri Bhagavan, managed to take Him there. A great reception awaited Him. A seat was arranged for Him, milk and fruits were offered and J.P. waited on Him with great kindness.

3. J. P., though represented in the book "*Self-Realization*" as having sought to injure Sri Bhagavan, was really kind to Him and his pranks were misunderstood to be acts of malice. His only weakness was that he wanted to make capital out of Sri Bhagavan for raising funds; which, of course, the Maharshi did not like. There was nothing wrong with J.P.

4. Madhavaswami, the attendant, asked if Sri Bhagavan remained without food for months in the underground cellar in the temple.

M.: Um! — Um! — food was forthcoming — milk, fruits—but whoever thought of food!

5. While staying in the mango-tree cave Sri Bhagavan used to string garlands for the images in the temple,

with lotuses, yellow flowers (*sarakonnai*) and green leaves.

6. After the completion of the Kalyanamantapam Sri Bhagavan had stayed there one night in disguise.

7. When He was sitting under a tree in the temple compound He was covered with dirt, for He never used to bathe. In the cold nights of December He used to fold up the legs, place his head between his folded legs and remain there without moving. Early in the morning the layer of dirt on His body was soaked with dew and mist and appeared white. After drying up in the sun it appeared dark.

8. When living on the Hill Sri Bhagavan used to help in the *pooja* of J.P., ringing the bell, washing the vessels, etc., all along remaining silent. He also used to read medical works, e.g., "*Ashtanga Hridayam*" in Malayalam, and point out the treatment contained in the book for the patients who sought the other sadhu's help. That sadhu did not himself know how to read these works.

12th February, 1937

358. *A Scene in the Hall*:—It is 8-20 P.M. Sri Bhagavan has returned after supper and stretched Himself on the Sofa. The light is dim; there are three men sitting on the floor; one is busy copying something from a journal; another is wrapt in meditation; and the third is looking around, having nothing to do. The hall is silent but for occasional clearing of the throat by Sri Bhagavan.

Madhavaswami, the attendant devotee, slips in noiselessly with a sheaf of betels in hand. He moves to the table. Sri Bhagavan, who is reclining on the sofa, sees him and calls out, yet kindly; "Sh, Sh; what are you doing?"

The attendant softly murmurs "Nothing", leaves the betel there and fumbles hesitatingly.

M.: "I do not want it." (The attendant softly settles down on the floor.) Sri Bhagavan: "Kasturi Pill —one after another, every day. The bottle will be empty —and more is ordered. I don't want it."

D.: Skilfully blames the olla podrida (அவியல்) of the day-meal for the indifferent health of Sri Bhagavan.

M.: "No—no—It was well made. It was good." Silence but for expectoration and eructation. After a few minutes, the attendant slips out and returns with a bottle in hand, goes near Sri Bhagavan and stretches out a pill saying: "Cummin seed-pill". Sri Bhagavan softly murmurs, "It contains lime juice; lime juice is not good for this." One devotee Rangaswamy Iyengar has in the meantime become wide awake from his meditation and looks on. The attendant is still holding out his hand with the pill. Sri Bhagavan continues: "Who is to munch it?"

D.: "It need not be munched. It may be kept in the mouth and sucked." The attendant hastily agrees, "Yes—yes—it is only to be sucked."

M.: "Give it to him" pointing to Rangaswamy Iyengar. "Let him munch it or suck it. I do not want it."

The attendant returns disappointed and squats on the floor; again rises up.

M.: "Eh!—Eh! What do you do? I do not want." The attendant moves up to the medicine chest, murmuring "Kasturi pill—it will be effective." Sri Bhagavan: "I shall soon be right even without it. Do not take it out. Eh!—Eh!—keep it there—I won't take it —do what you like." The attendant again settles down and all remain silent before retiring to bed.

18th February, 1937

359. At about 7-30 a.m. Sri Bhagavan was climbing up the hill after breakfast. Padananda went and prostrated, stood up and said, "All right, I have had *darsan*......I shall return." Sri Bhagavan smilingly, "Whose *darsan?* Why don't you say that you gave *darsan to me?*"

At about 9 a.m. a devotee from Poona (Mr. Parkhi) saluted Sri Bhagavan and read out his *ashtaka* praying to Sri Bhagavan for Grace. The piece finishes with a prayer for quick liberation (*jhatiti mukti*) and the devotee emphasised it.

M.: Mukti, i.e., liberation, is not to be gained hereafter. It is there for ever, here and now.

D.: I agree, but I do not experience it.

M.: The experience is here and now. One cannot deny one's own self.

D.: That means existence and not happiness.

M.: Existence = happiness = Being. The word *Mukti* (liberation) is so provoking. Why should one seek it? He believes that there is bondage and therefore seeks liberation. But the fact is that there is no bondage but only liberation. Why call it by a name and seek it?

D.: True—but we are ignorant.

M.: Only remove ignorance. That is all there is to be done.

14th February, 1937

360. The aristocratic gentleman from Lucknow has written to Mr. Paul Brunton that his wife has since lost that peace of mind which she had gained by her visits to Sri Bhagavan; so he desires that Sri Bhagavan may be pleased to restore the same peace.

When requested, Sri Bhagavan said, "It is due to weakness of mind that peace once gained is later lost."

19th February, 1937

361. Mudaliar Swami, son of the lady who brings *bhiksha* every day to Sri Bhagavan, related the following interesting incident :

While Sri Bhagavan was staying in Virupakshi Cave Sri Bhagavan and Mudaliar Swami were walking together behind the Skandasramam site. There was a huge rock about 15 feet high ; it was cleft, a girl—(a shepherdess)—was standing there crying. Sri Bhagavan asked the reason of her sorrow. She said, "A sheep of mine has slipped into this cleft ; so I am crying." Sri Bhagavan descended into the cleft, took the sheep on his shoulders, climbed up to the surface and delivered the sheep to her. Mudaliar Swami says that it was a very remarkable feat for any human being.

362. Mr. Subbaramiah, a college professor from Nellore, asked about *mukti*.

M. : All questions relating to *mukti* are inadmissible ; because *mukti* means release from bondage which implies the present existence of bondage. There is no bondage and therefore no *mukti* either.

D. : The *sāstras* speak of it and its grades.

M. : The *sāstras* are not meant for the wise because they do not need them ; the ignorant do not want them. Only the *mumukshus* look up to the *sāstras*. That means that the *sāstras* are neither for wisdom nor for ignorance.

D. : Vasishta is said to be a *jivanmukta* whereas Janaka was a *videhamukta*.

M. : Why speak of Vasishta or Janaka ? What about oneself ?

There were many new visitors this day. Two of them were speaking of Ganapati Muni in Sri Bhagavan's presence. Sri Bhagavan put in a few words in their talk :

(1) Some say that *jnāna* and *upāsana* are the two wings with which to fly to *mukti*. What is *jnāna*? What is *upāsana*? *Jnāna* is ever present. That is the ultimate goal also. When an effort is made the effort is called *upāsana*; when it is effortless it is *jnāna*, which is the same as *mukti*.

(2) After some discussion among themselves, a visitor said: Some Superior Power must help us to shake off the externalities.

Sri Bhagavan said: Who sees the externalities? Or do they say that they exist? If so let the world say that it exists.

Again, if the world is a projection from the interior it must be recognised that it is projected simultaneously with the 'I'-thought.

Either way the 'I' is the fundamental basis knowing which all else is known.

(3) Another said that Ganapati Muni used to say that he could even go to Indra-loka and say what Indra was doing but he could not go within and find the 'I'.

Sri Bhagavan added that Ganapati Muni used to say that it was easy to move forward but impossible to move backward.

Then Sri Bhagavan remarked: However far one goes there he is. Where is moving backward? The same truth is contained in the *mantra* in Isa Upanishad.

(4) In reply to a querry how Ganapati Muni became an *āsu kavi* (inspired poet), Sri Bhagavan said: It is said that while he was making *tapasya* Siva appeared and gave him milk or honey to drink, after which he became *āsu kavi*.

20th February, 1937

363. A European civilian, Mr. Dodwell, Deputy Secretary, Finance, Madras Government arrived with his wife

before 1 p.m. and stayed in the hall till about 3-30 p.m.

The lady asked: The spiritual leaders in the West say that the spiritual centre is in India. Is there any contact among the spiritual leaders in India? Or is contact possible between the leaders of the East and the West?

M.: What do you mean by spiritual centre?

D.: The spiritual centre is the seat of spiritual leaders.

M.: What do you understand by 'spiritual leaders'?

D.: In the West there is a crisis. Scientific knowledge is far advanced. Such knowledge is used for generating destructive forces. There is a movement for making them constructive. When thus diverted it will be for the good of the world. The leaders of this movement are the redeemers.

M.: By 'spiritual leaders' we understand those who are 'spiritual' as opposed to 'physical'. Spirit is unlimited and formless. Such too is the spiritual centre. There is only one such centre. Whether in the West or in the East the centre cannot differ; nor has it any locality. Being unlimited it includes the leaders, the men, the world, the forces of destruction and of construction. There is no differentiation. You speak of contact because you are thinking of the embodied beings as spiritual leaders. The spiritual men are not bodies; they are not aware of their bodies. They are only spirit, limitless and formless. There is always unity among them and all others; nay, they comprise all.

The spirit is the Self. If the Self is realised, these questions cannot arise at all.

Mrs. Jinarajadasa from Adyar: Self-Realisation sounds so easy, but yet is so difficult in practice.

M.: What can be easier? The Self is more intimate than anything else. If that cannot be realised, is it easy to realise what is apart and farther away?

D. : Self-Realisation is so illusory. How can it be made permanent ?

M. : The Self can never be illusory. It is the only Reality. That which appears will also disappear and is therefore impermanent. The Self never appears and disappears and is therefore permanent.

D. : Yes—true. You know that, in the Theosophical Society, they meditate to seek the masters to guide them.

M. : The master is within. Meditation is meant for the removal of ignorance, of the wrong idea that he is without. If he be a stranger whose advent you await he is bound to disappear also. Where is the use of a transient being like that ?

However, as long as you think that you are an individual or that you are the body, so long the master also is necessary and he will appear with a body. When this wrong identification ceases the master will be found to be the Self.

There is a stanza in *Kaivalya* :

> "My Lord ! You had remained as my Self within, protecting me in all my past incarnations. Now, by your Grace, you have manifested yourself as my master and revealed yourself as the Self."

Just see what happens in sleep. There is no ego, no India, no seekers, no master, etc. ; and yet you are,—and happy too.

The ego, India, seekers, etc., appear now ; but they are not apart from nor independent of you.

There was a large group of visitors on account of the election holidays and some of these also joined in the discussion.

D. : One of them asked about re-incarnation.

M. : Re-incarnation can only be so long as there is ignorance. There is no incarnation either now, nor was there before, nor will be hereafter. This is the truth.

D.: What is the ego-self?

M.: The ego-self appears and disappears and is transitory, whereas the Real Self always abides permanent. Though you are actually the true Self yet you wrongly identify the Real Self with the ego-self.

D.: How does the mistakes come about?

M.: See if it has come about.

D.: One has to sublimate the ego-self into the true Self.

M.: The ego-self does not exist at all.

D.: Why does it give us trouble?

M.: To whom is the trouble? The trouble also is imagined. Trouble and pleasure are only for the ego.

D.: Why is the world so wrapped up in ignorance?

M.: Take care of yourself. Let the world take care of itself. See your Self. If you are the body there is the gross world also. If you are spirit all is spirit alone.

D.: It will hold good for the individual, but what of the rest?

M.: Do it first and then see if the question arises afterwards.

D.: Is there *avidyā?*

M.: For whom is it?

D.: For the ego-self.

M.: Yes, for the ego. Remove the ego; *avidyā* is gone. Look for it, the ego vanishes. The Real Self alone remains. The ego professing *avidyā* is not to be seen. There is no *avidyā* in reality. All *sāstras* are meant to disprove the existence of *avidyā.*

D.: How did the ego arise?

M.: Ego is not. Otherwise do you admit of two selves? How can there be *avidyā* in the absence of the ego? If you begin to enquire, the *avidyā,* which is already non-existent, will be found not to be or you will say it has fled away.

Ignorance pertains to the ego. Why do you think of the ego and also suffer ? What is ignorance again ? It is that which is non-existent. However the worldly life requires the hypothesis of *avidyā*. *Avidyā* is only our ignorance and nothing more. It is ignorance or forgetfulness of the Self. Can there be darkness before the Sun ? Similarly, can there be ignorance before the Self-evident and Self-luminous Self ? If you know the Self there will be no darkness, no ignorance and no misery.

It is the mind which feels the trouble, misery, etc. Darkness never comes or goes. See the Sun and there is no darkness. Similarly, see the self and *avidyā* will be found not to exist.

D. : Sri Ramakrishna and others practised concentration.

M. : Concentration and all other practices are meant for recognising the absence, *i.e.*, non-existence of ignorance. No one can deny his own being. Being is knowledge, *i.e.*, awareness. That awareness implies absence of ignorance. Therefore everyone naturally admits non-existence of ignorance. And yet why should he suffer ? Because he thinks he is this or that. That is wrong. "I am" alone is ; and not "I am so and so", or "I am such and such". When existence is absolute it is right ; when it is particularised it is wrong. That is the whole truth.

See how each one admits that he is. Does he look into a mirror to know his being ? His awareness makes him admit his existence or being. But he confuses it with the body, etc. Why should he do so ? Is he aware of his body in his sleep ? No ; yet he himself does not cease to be in sleep. He exists there though without the body. How does he know that he exists in sleep ? Does he require a mirror to reveal his own being now ? Only be aware, and your being is clear in your awareness.

D. : How is one to know the Self ?

M. : "Knowing the Self" means "Being the Self". Can you say that you do not know the Self? Though you cannot see your own eyes and though not provided with a mirror to look in, do you deny the existence of your eyes? Similarly, you are aware of the Self even though the Self is not objectified. Or do you deny your Self because it is not objectified? When you say "I cannot know the Self" it means absence in terms of relative knowledge, because you have been so accustomed to relative knowledge that you identify yourself with it. Such wrong identity has forged the difficulty of not knowing the obvious Self because it cannot be objectified; and you ask, "How is one to know the Self?" Your difficulty is centred in "How"? Who is to know the Self? Can the body know it?

Let the body answer. Who says that the body is perceived now?

In order to meet this kind of ignorance the *sāstras* formulate the theory of God's *leela* or *krīda* (*i.e.*, play). God is said to emanate as the mind, the sense and the body and to play. Who are you to say that this play is a trouble to you? Who are you to question the doings of God?

Your duty is *to be*; and not *to be this or that.* "I AM that I AM" sums up the whole truth. The method is summed up in "BE STILL". What does "stillness" mean? It means "destroy yourself". Because any form or shape is the cause of trouble. Give up the notion that "I am so and so". Our *sāstras* say: *ahamiti sphurati* (it shines as 'I').

D. : What is *sphurana* (shining)?

M. : (*Aham, aham*) 'I'—'I' is the Self; (*Aham idam*) "I am this" or "I and this" is the ego. Shining is there always. The ego is transitory: When the 'I' is kept up as 'I' alone it is the Self; when it flies at a tangent and says "this" it is the ego.

D.: Is God apart from the Self?

M.: The Self is God. "I AM" is God. "I am the Self, O Gudakesa!" (*Ahamātma Gudākesa*).

This question arises because you are holding the ego-self. This will not arise if you hold the True Self. For the Real Self will not and cannot ask anything. If God be apart from the Self He must be a self-less God, which is absurd.

D.: What is *namaskāra* (prostration)?

M.: Prostration means "subsidence of the ego". What is "subsidence"? To merge into the source of its origin. God cannot be deceived by outward genuflexions, bowings and prostrations. He sees if the individuality is there or not.

Mr. Shamanna: Is there a sixth sense to feel "I AM"?

M.: Do you have it in your sleep? There is only one being functioning through the five senses. Or do you mean that each sense is independent of the Self and there are five selves admitting of a sixth to control them? There is a power working through these five senses. How can you deny the existence of such Power? Do you deny your existence? Do you not remain even in sleep where the body is not perceived? The same 'I' continues to be now; so we admit our existence, whether there is the body or not. The senses work periodically. Their work begins and ends. There must be a substratum on which their activities depend. Where do they appear and merge? There must be a single substratum. Were you to say that that single unit is not perceived, it is an admission of its being single; for you say that there is no second one to know it.

All these discussions are only to get rid of ignorance. When that is done everything will be clear. It is a matter of competence, or ripeness.

D.: Cannot Grace hasten such competence in a seeker ?

M.: Leave it to Him. Surrender unreservedly. One of two things must be done. Either surrender because you admit your inability and also require a Higher Power to help you ; or investigate into the cause of misery, go into the source and merge into the Self. Either way you will be free from misery. God never forsakes one who has surrendered. (*Māmekam saranam vraja.*)

D.: What is the drift of the mind after surrender ?

M.: Is the surrendered mind raising the question ? (Laughter.)

364. The Nellore Professor asked about *visvarupa darsana.*

M.: *Visvātma darsana* is *visvarupa darsana, i.e.,* the universal Self or the cosmic Self is the cosmos. Sri Krishna started the discourse in Chapter II, saying, "I have no form". In Chapter XI, He says, "See my form as the Universe". Is it consistent ? Again he says, "I transcend the three worlds," but Arjuna sees the three worlds in Him. Sri Krishna says, "I cannot be seen by men, Gods, etc." ; yet Arjuna sees himself and the Gods in Him. No one could see and yet Arjuna was endowed with divine sight to see Him. Does it not look a maze of contradictions ?

The answer is that the understanding is wrong. *Sthula dristi* on the physical plane is absurd. *Jnāna dristi* (subtle understanding) is necessary. That is why Arjuna was given *divya chakshuh* (divine sight). Can such sight be gross ? Will such interpretation lead you to a right understanding ?

Sri Krishna says *Kalosmi*, 'I am Time'. Does Time have a shape?

Again if the universe be His form should it not be one and unchanging? Why does He say to Arjuna, "See in me whatever you desire to see?" That means that His form is according to the desires of the seer. They speak of 'divine sight' and yet paint the scene, each according to his own view. There is the seer also in the seen. What is all this? Even a mesmerist can make you see strange scenes. You call this a trick, whereas the other you call divine. Why this difference? Anything seen cannot be real. That is the truth.

365. As Sri Bhagavan was continuing in the same strain, a visitor asked how to overcome the identity of the Self with the body.

M.: What about sleep?

D.: There is ignorance prevailing.

M.: How do you know your ignorance in sleep? Did you exist in sleep, or not?

D.: I do not know.

M.: Do you deny your existence in sleep?

D.: I must admit it by my reasoning.

M.: How do you infer your existence?

D.: By reasoning and experience.

M.: Is reasoning necessary for experience? (Laughter).

D.: Is meditation analytical or synthetical?

M.: Analysis or synthesis are in the region of intellect. The Self transcends the intellect.

366. Before leaving at 3-30 p.m. Mrs. Dodwell raised a second question, asking what is meant by *Neti-Neti*.

M.: There is now wrong identification of the Self with the body, senses, etc. You proceed to discard these, and this is *Neti*. This can be done only by holding to the one which cannot be discarded. That is *iti* alone.

21st February, 1937

367. A Marathi lady, a casual visitor then taking leave, was almost on the point of bursting into tears; she asked: I know that *mukti* is impossible in one life. Still may I not have peace of mind in this life?

The Master looked at her very kindly and said smiling softly: Life and all else are in Brahman alone. Brahman is here and now. Investigate.

D.: I am practising meditation for a number of years. Yet my mind is not steady and cannot be brought to bear on meditation.

M. again looked steadily at her, and said: "Do it now and all will be right."

368. A young girl of 9 or 10, whose mother is a Research Scholar in Sanskrit in the University of Madras, accompanied by Mr. M. F. met Sri Bhagavan in Palākothu at about 12 noon. Sri Bhagavan, as usual with Him, kindly smiled on her. She asked Sri Bhagavan: "Why is there misery on Earth?"

M.: Due to Karma.

D.: Who makes Karma bear fruits?

M.: God.

D.: God makes us do karma and gives bad fruits for bad karma. Is it fair?

Sri Bhagavan almost laughed and was very pleased with her. Later He was coaxing her to read something on returning to the hall. Since then He is watching her.

22nd February, 1937

369. A Marathi gentleman and wife, past middle age, are on a visit here. They are quiet and simple. Both of them tearfully took leave and the gentleman even sobbed out a prayer for Sri Bhagavan's Grace. Sri Bhagavan gazed at them, with his lips parted showing the row of white teeth. His eyes also had a tear in them.

370. Sri Bhagavan was in the cattle-shed. People were working and he watched their work for a short time. Then someone came and said that a large number of visitors were waiting in the hall. Sri Bhagavan in His calm way said: "Yes—Yes, you do your work. Let Me go for Mine. People are waiting for Me. Let Me go." Then he left the place.

23rd February, 1937

371. There was a group of three middle-aged Andhras on a visit to Sri Bhagavan. One of them kneeled and asked: I am performing *hathayoga,* namely *basti, dhauti, neti,* etc. I find a blood vessel hardened in the ankle. Is it a result of Yoga?

M.: The blood-vessel would have hardened under any circumstances. It does not trouble you as much now as it would otherwise. *Hathayoga* is a cleansing process. It also helps peace of mind, after leading you to *prāṇāyāma.*

D.: May I do *prāṇāyāma*? Is it useful?

M.: *Prāṇāyāma* is an aid for the control of mind. Only you should not stop with *prāṇāyāma.* You must proceed further to *pratyāhāra, dhārana, dhyāna* and *samādhi.* Full results are reaped finally.

Another of the group asked: How are lust, anger, acquisitiveness, confusion, pride and jealousy overcome?

M.: By *dhyāna.*

D.: What is *dhyāna?*

M.: *Dhyāna* is holding on to a single thought and putting off all other thoughts.

D.: What is to be meditated upon?

M.: Anything that you prefer.

D.: Siva, Vishnu, and Gāyatri are said to be equally efficacious. Which should I meditate upon?

M.: Anyone you like best. They are all equal in their effect. But you should stick to one.

D.: How to meditate?

M.: Concentrate on that one whom you like best. If a single thought prevails, all other thoughts are put off and finally eradicated. So long as diversity prevails there are bad thoughts. When the object of love prevails only good thoughts hold the field. Therefore hold on to one thought only. *Dhyāna* is the chief practice.

A little later Sri Bhagavan continued:

Dhyāna means fight. As soon as you begin meditation other thoughts will crowd together, gather force and try to sink the single thought to which you try to hold. The good thought must gradually gain strength by repeated practice. After it has grown strong the other thoughts will be put to flight. This is the battle royal always taking place in meditation.

One wants to rid oneself of misery. It requires peace of mind, which means absence of perturbation owing to all kinds of thoughts. Peace of mind is brought about by *dhyāna* alone.

D.: What is the need then for *prānāyāma*?

M.: *Prānāyāma* is meant for one who cannot directly control the thoughts. It serves as a brake to a car. But one should not stop with it, as I said before, but must proceed to *pratyāhāra*, *dhārana* and *dhyāna*. After the fruition of *dhyāna*, the mind will come under control even in the absence of *prānāyāmā*. The *āsanas* (postures) help *prānāyāma*, which helps *dhyāna* in its turn, and peace of mind results. Here is the purpose of *hatha yoga*.

Later Sri Bhagavan continued:

When *dhyāna* is well established it cannot be given up. It will go on automatically even when you are engaged in work, play or enjoyment. It will persist in sleep too. *Dhyāna* must become so deep-rooted that it will be natural to one.

D.: What rite or action is necessary for the development of *dhyāna*?

M.: *Dhyāna* is itself the action, the rite and the effort. It is the most intense and potent of all. No other effort is necessary.

D.: Is not *japa* necessary?

M.: Is *dhyāna* not *vāk* (speech)? Why is *japa* necessary for it? If *dhyāna* is gained there is no need for anything else.

D.: Is not a vow of silence helpful?

M.: A vow is only a vow. It may help *dhyāna* to some extent. But what is the good of keeping the mouth closed and letting the mind run riot. If the mind be engaged in *dhyāna*, where is the need for speech?

Nothing is as good as *dhyāna*. Should one take to action with a vow of silence, where is the good of the vow?

D.: What is *jnāna-mārga*?

M.: I have been saying it for so long. What is *jnāna*? *Jnāna* means realisation of the Truth. It is done by *dhyāna*. *Dhyāna* helps you to hold on to Truth to the exclusion of all thoughts.

D.: Why are there so many Gods mentioned?

M.: The body is only one. Still, how many functions are performed by it? The source of all the functions is only one. It is in the same way with the Gods also.

D.: Why does a man suffer misery?

M.: Misery is due to multifarious thoughts. If the thoughts are unified and centred on a single item there is no misery, but happiness is the result. Then, even the thought, "I do something" is absent; nor will there be an eye on the fruit of action.

372. *D.*: Horripilation, sobbing voice, joyful tears, etc., are mentioned in "*Atma Vidya Vilāsa*" and other works. Are these found in *samādhi*, or before, or after?

M.: All these are the symptoms of exceedingly subtle modes of mind (*vrittis*). Without duality they cannot remain. *Samādhi* is Perfect Peace where these cannot find place. After emerging from *samādhi* the remembrance of the state gives rise to these symptoms. In *bhakti mārga* (path of devotion) these are the precursors to *samādhi*.

D.: Are they not so in the path of *jnāna*?

M.: May be. There is no definiteness about it. It depends on the nature of the individual. Individuality entirely lost, these cannot find a place. Even the slighest trace of it being present, these symptoms become manifest.

Manicka Vāchagar and other saints have spoken of these symptoms. They say tears rush forth involuntarily and irrepressibly. Though aware of tears they are unable to repress them. I had the same experience when I was staying in Virupāksha cave.

D.: Sleep state is said to be the experience of Bliss, yet, on recollecting it the hairs do not stand on end. Why should they do so, if the *samādhi* state is recollected?

M.: *Samādhi* means sleep in waking state (*jāgrat sushupti*). Bliss is overpowering and the experience is very clear, whereas it is different in sleep.

D.: Can we put it that in sleep there is no unhappiness, nor happiness, *i.e.*, the experience is negative not positive.

M.: But the recollection is positive—"I slept happily," says the man. So there must be the experience of happiness in sleep.

D.: Does Bliss consist only in the absence of unhappiness, or is it anything positive?

M.: *It is positive.* Loss of unhappiness and rise of happiness are simultaneous.

D.: Can it be that the recollection of happiness in sleep is not clear and so there is no horripilation, etc. ?

M.: The Bliss of *samādhi* is a perfectly clear experience and its recollection also is similar. But the experience of sleep is otherwise.

28th February, 1937

373. H. H. The Maharajah of Mysore had a private interview with Sri Bhagavan in the newly built bathroom from 9-15 to 9-30 a.m. His Highness saluted Sri Bhagavan placing his head on Sri Bhagavan's feet and said :

I have read Sri Bhagavan's life and long had a desire to meet Him, but my circumstances are such that intentions of this kind cannot easily be carried into effect. Nor can I stay here as other disciples can, considering all my limitations. While I remain here for about 15 minutes, I shall now pray only for Thy Grace. (On departure H.H. again saluted Sri Bhagavan as before and left after presenting two fine shawls and some money to the Office.)

374. H. H. The Maharaja of Travancore had an interview from 4-30 p.m. to 5-15 p.m.

13th March, 1937

Their Highnesses The Maharajah and the Maharani of Travancore who arrived at Tiruvannamalai by the 8 a.m. train visited the Asramam at 4-15 p.m. The public were excluded from the hall where Bhagavan sat. Even devotees who were daily visiting the hall were by a sad mistake excluded from the interview. The Royal party were introduced to Sri Bhagavan by a Retired District Magistrate. Two Aides-de-Camp, the Private Secretary to H. H. The Maharaja, some officials of the Travancore State and an Advocate of Mylapore were present. The discussion started by the Dt. Magistrate went on about *manas*, concentration, Realisation, purpose of creation, etc. Her Highness put some questions expressing her doubts and they were all explained by Sri Bhagavan. H. H. The Maharaja also took part in the discussion. The whole conversation was in Tamil and Malayalam.

During the visit of the Royal Family of Travancore, Her Highness appeared very cultured, vivacious and conversant with Malayalam, Tamil and English. Most of the questions were put by Her Highness. One of the questions was :

D. : What is the purpose of creation ?

M. : It is to give rise to this question ; investigate the answer to this question, and finally abide in the supreme or rather the primal source of all, including the Self. The investigation will resolve itself into one of quest for the Self and cease only after the non-self is sifted away and the Self realised in its purity and glory.

D. : How is the investigation to start ?

M. : The Self is plain to all and the starting also equally plain.

D. : What is the starting-point for one in my stage of development ?

M. : Each one has some method of *upāsana* or *japa*. If that is pursued in all sincerity with due perseverance, it will automatically lead to the investigation of the Self.

[The writer of these notes was not present and the above was gathered from one of the attendants of Sri Maharshi.]

21st March, 1937

375. A middle-aged Kanarese visitor asked about *akarma* (actionless act).

M. : Whatever one does after the ego has vanished is *akarma.*

376. A learned Telugu visitor, who had composed a song in praise of Sri Bhagavan, read it out, placed it at His feet and saluted. After a time he asked for Upadesh.

M.: The Upadesh is contained in "*Upadesa Saram*".

D.: But oral and personal instruction is valuable.

M.: If there be anything new and hitherto unknown Upadesh will be appropriate. Here it happens to be stilling the mind and remaining free from thoughts.

D.: It looks impossible.

M.: But it is precisely the pristine and eternal state of all.

D.: It is not perceived in our everyday active life.

M.: Everyday life is not divorced from the Eternal State. So long as the daily life is imagined to be different from the spiritual life these difficulties arise. If the spiritual life is rightly understood the active life will be found to be not different from it.

Can the mind be got at by the mind on looking for it as an object? The source of the mental functions must be sought and gained. That is the Reality.

One does not know the Self owing to the interference of thoughts. The Self is realised when thoughts subside.

D.: "Only one in a million pursues *sādhanas* to completion." (Bh. Gita, VII, 3).

M.: "Whenever the turbulent mind wavers, then and there pull it in and bring it under control." (Bh. Gita, VI, 26). "Seeing the mind with the mind" (*manasa mana alokya*), so proclaim the Upanishads.

D.: Is the mind an *upādhi* (limiting adjunct)?

M.: Yes.

D.: Is the seen (*drisya*) world real (*satya*)?

M.: It is true in the same degree as the seer (*drashta*). Subject, object and perception form the triad (*triputi*). There is a reality beyond these three. These appear and disappear, whereas the truth is eternal.

D. : These *triputi sambhava* are only temporal.

M. : Yes, if one recognises the Self even in temporal matters these will be found to be non-existent, rather inseparate from the Self; and they will be going on at the same time.

22nd March, 1937

377. A middle-aged Andhra visitor: A man is said to be divine. Why then does he have regrets?

M. : Divinity refers to the essential nature. The regrets are of Prakriti.

D. : How is one to overcome regrets?

M. : By realising the Divinity in him.

D. : How?

M. : By practice.

D. : What kind of practice?

M. : Meditation.

D. : Mind is not steady while meditating.

M. : It will be all right by practice.

D. : How is the mind to be steadied?

M. : By strengthening it.

D. : How to strengthen it?

M. : It grows strong by *satsanga* (the company of the wise).

D. : Shall we add prayers, etc.?

M. : Yes.

D. : What of the one who has no regrets?

M. : He is an accomplished Yogi. There is no question about him.

D. : People cite disasters, *e.g.*, earthquakes, famines, etc., to disprove God. How shall we meet their contention?

M. : Wherefrom have they come—those who argue?

D. : They say, "Nature".

M. : Some call it "Nature"—others "God".

D.: Are we to keep anything against a rainy day; or to live a precarious life for spiritual attainments?

M.: God looks after everything.

27th March, 1937

378. In the course of a conversation with an Andhra visitor, Sri Bhagavan quoted:

"*Asamsayam mahābāho mano durnigraham chalam*
Abhyāsena tu Kaunteya vairāgyena cha grhyate"
—Bh. Gita, Ch. VI, 35.

"Without doubt, O long-armed Hero,
the mind is restless, hard to curb.
Yet by constant effort, Partha,
matched with detachment—curbed it *is*."

To explain *vairāgya* Sri Bhagavan again quoted:

Sankalpaprabhavān kāmāms tyaktvā sarvān aseshatah
Manasaivendriyagrāmam viniyamya samantatah"
(Ch. VI, 24).

"Having cast out without remains
all longings born of thought for self,
Having drawn in by mind alone
his team of senses from all sides.—"

As for practice (*abhyāsa*):

"*Sanaissanairuparamet buddhya dhrigrhitaya*
Ātmasamstam manah krtvā na kinchidapi chintayet"
(VI—25)

"By slow approaches let him come
to rest, with patient, rock-poised Will;
His mind at home in Selfhood pure,
let him create no *thought* at all."

Again for *jnāna*:

"*Yato yato nischarati manas chanchalam asthiram*
Tatastato niyamyai tad ātmanyeva vaśam nayet"
(VI—26)

"Though over and over the fickle mind,
  all restlessness, a-wandering goes,
Still over and over let him regain
  control, and poise it back in Self."

2nd April 1937

379. One Tirumalpad of Nilambur, a Malayali gentleman, asked Sri Bhagavan for an explanation of "*Ātma Vidyā.*" ("Knowledge of the Self.")

M.: Sri Bhagavan explained this short piece of 5 stanzas as follows: Chidambaram is the famous place of pilgrimage associated with Nandanar who sang that *Atma Vidya* is *most difficult* of attainment. Muruganar (a longstanding devotee of Sri Bhagavan) began however that *Ātma Vidyā* is the *easiest* of attainment. "*Ayye atisulabham*" is the burden of the song. In explanation of this extraordinary statement, he argued that *Atma* being the Self is eternally obvious even to the least of men. The original statement and the subsequent reasoning are incompatible because there need be no *attainment* if the Self is the substratum of all selves and so obvious. Naturally he could not pursue the theme further and laid the first four lines composed by him before Sri Bhagavan for completion.

Sri Bhagawan admitted the truth of the disciple's statement and pointed out why the Self, though obvious, is yet hidden. It is the wrong identity of the Self with the body, etc.

D.: How did the wrong identity arise?

M.: Due to thoughts. If these thoughts are put an end to, the real Self should shine forth of itself.

D.: How are these thoughts to be ended?

M.: Find out their basis. All of them are strung on the single 'I'-thought. Quell it; all others are quashed. Moreover there is no use knowing all except the Self. If the Self is known all others became known. Hence is Self-Realisation the primary and sole duty of man.

D.: How to quell the 'I'-thought?

M.: If its source is sought it does not arise, and thus it is quelled.

D.: Where and how to find it?

M.: It is in fact the consciousness which enables the individuals to function in different ways. Pure Consciousness is the Self. All that is required to realise the Self is to "Be Still."

D.: What can be easier than that?

M.: So *Ātma Vidyā* is the easiest of attainment.

380. A European gentleman asked: How do you answer the question, "Who are you?"

M.: Ask yourself the question, "Who am I?"

D.: Please tell me how you have found it. I shall not be able to find it myself. (The 'I' is the result of biological forces. It results in silence. I want to know how the master finds it.)

M.: Is it found only by logic? The scientific analysis is due to intellect.

D.: According to J. C. Bose, nature does not make any difference between a worm and a man.

M.: What is Nature?

D.: It is that which exists.

M.: How do you know the existence?

D.: By my senses.

M.: 'My' implies your existence. But you are speaking of another's existence. You must exist to speak of "my senses". There cannot be 'my' without 'I'.

D.: I am a poor creature. I come to ask you, Great Master that you are, what this existence is. There is no special significance in the word *existence*. He exists, I exist and others exist. What of that ?

M. : The existence of any one posited, shows your own existence. "Existence is your nature."

D. : There is nothing strange in anything existing.

M. : How do you know its existence—rather than your own existence ?

D. : What is new in the existence of anything ? I take up your book and read there that the one question one should ask oneself is, " Who am I " ? I want to know " Who are you ? " I have my own answer. If another says the same, and so too, millions of others, there is the probability of the Self. I want a positive answer for the question and no playing with words.

M. : In this way you are in the region of probabilities at the best.

D. : Yes. There are no certainties. Even God cannot be proved to be absolute certainty.

M. : Leave God alone for the time being. What of yourself ?

D. : I want confirmation of the Self.

M. : You seek confirmation from others. Each one though addressed as 'you', styles himself 'I'. The confirmation is only from 'I'. There is no 'you' at all. All are comprised in 'I'. The other can be known only when the Self is posited. The others do not exist without the subject.

D. : Again, this is nothing new. When I was with Sir C. V. Raman he told me that the theory of smell could be explained from his theory of light. Smell need no longer be explained in terms of chemistry. Now, there is something new ; it is progress. That is what I mean, when I say that there is nothing new in all the statements I hear now.

M.: 'I' is never new. It is eternally the same.

D.: Do you mean to say that there is no progress?

M.: Progress is perceived by the outgoing mind. Everything is still when the mind is introverted and the Self is sought.

D.: The Sciences—What becomes of them?

M.: They all end in the Self. The Self is their finality.

(It was 5 P.M.; Sri Bhagavan left the hall and the gentleman left for the station.)

381. Mr. Bose, the Bengali Engineer, asked the meaning of the last stanza "*Ātma Vidyā*" ("Knowledge of the Self"). Sri Bhagavan explained on the following lines:

There is the world perceived, the perception is only apparent; it requires location for existence and light. Such *existence and light* are simultaneous with the rise of mind. So the physical existence and illumination are part of mental existence and illumination. The latter is not absolute, for the mind rises and sinks. The mind has its substratum in the Self which is self-evident, i.e. its existence and self-luminosity are obvious. That is absolute being, continuous in sleep, waking and dream states also.

The world consists of variety, which is the function of the mind. The mind shines by reflected light—i.e. light reflected from the self. Just as the pictures in a cinema show are seen only in diffused, i.e. artificial light, but not in a strong glare or in thick darkness, so also the world pictures are perceptible only in diffused, i.e. reflected light of the Self through the darkness of *avidyā* (ignorance). The world cannot be seen either in pure ignorance as in sleep, or in pure light as in Self-Realisation. *Avidyā* is the cause of variety.

D.: The Engineer said that he understood it only intellectually.

M.: Because intellect holds you at present, i.e. you are in the grip of intellect in the waking state when you discuss these matters.

Later it was added that Grace is needed for Realisation.

The Engineer asked how Grace was to be got.

M.: Grace is the Self. It is not manifest because of ignorance prevailing. With *sraddha,* it will become manifest.

Sraddha, Grace, Light, Spirit are all synonymous with the Self.

5th April, 1937

382. A Telugu gentleman, quiet in look, but learned in philosophy, asked Sri Bhagavan about *Manolaya.*

M.: Sri Bhagavan said that everything is contained in "*Upadesa Saram*", a copy of which the man was holding in his hand.

D.: What is mind ?

M.: See what it is.

D.: It is '*sankalpa vikalpātmaka*' (made up of thoughts and their changes).

M.: Whose *sankalpa* (thought) ?

D.: *Sankalpa* is the nature of the mind.

M.: Of what is the *sankalpa* ?

D.: Of the externalities.

M.: Quite so. Is that your nature ?

D.: It is of the mind.

M.: What is your nature ?

D.: *Suddha Chaitanya* (Pure Conscious Light).

M.: Then why do you worry about *sankalpa* and the rest ?

D.: The mind is admitted to be changing and unsteady (*sanchala* and *asthira*).

M.: It is also said in the same place that the mind is to be introverted and made to merge into the Self; that the practice must be long because slow and must be continued until it is totally merged in the Self.

D.: I want *prasād,* i.e. Grace, for it.

M.: It is always with you. All that is required of you is not to confound yourself with the extrovert mind but to abide as the Self. That is *prasād.*

The gentleman saluted and retired.

383. Swami Lokesananda, a Sanyasi, asked Sri Bhagavan: Is there *prārabdha* for a *jivanmukta*?

M.: Who is the questioner? From whom does the question proceed? Is it a *jivanmukta* who is asking?

D.: No, I am not a *mukta* as yet.

M.: Then why not let the *jivanmukta* ask the question for himself?

D.: The doubt is for *me.*

M.: Quite so. The *ajnāni* has doubts but not a *jnāni.*

D.: According to the creed that there is nothing new (*ajātavāda*), the explanations of Sri Bhagavan are faultless; but are they admissible in other schools?

M.: There are three methods of approach in *Advaita vāda.*

(1) The *ajātavāda* is represented by no loss, no creation, no one bound, no *sādhaka,* no one desirous of liberation, no liberation. This is the Supreme Truth. ("*Mandukya Kārika*", II—32.)

According to this, there is only One and it admits of no discussion.

(2) *Drishti Srishtivāda* is illustrated thus:- Simultaneous creation. There are two friends sleeping side by side. One of them dreams that he goes to Benares with

his friend and returns. He tells his friend that both of them have been in Benares. The other denies it. The statement is true from the standpoint of one and the denial from that of the other.

(3) *Srishti Drishtivāda* is plain (Gradual creation and knowledge of it).

Karma is posited as past *karma*, etc., *Prārabdha*, *Āgāmi* and *Sanchita*. There must be *kartritva* (doership) and *karta* (doer) for it. *Karma* (action) cannot be for the body because it is insentient. It is only so long as *dehātma buddhi* ('I am the body idea') lasts. After transcending *dehātma buddhi* one becomes a *jnāni*. In the absence of that idea (*buddhi*) there cannot be either *kartritva* or *karta*. So a *jnāni* has no *karma*. That is his experience. Otherwise he is not a *jnāni*. However an *ajnāni* identifies the *jnāni* with his body, which the *jnāni* does not do. So the *ajnāni* finds the *jnāni* acting, because his body is active, and therefore he asks if the *jnāni* is not affected by *prārabdha*.

The scriptures say that *jnāna* is the fire which burns away all *karma* (*sarvakarmāni*). *Sarva* (all) is interpreted in two ways: (1) to include *prārabdha* and (2) to exclude it. In the first way: if a man with three wives dies, it is asked, "Can two of them be called widows and the third not?" All are widows. So it is with *prārabdha*, *āgāmi* and *sanchita*. When there is no *karta* none of them can hold out any longer.

The second explanation is, however, given only to satisfy the enquirer. It is said that all *karma* is burnt away leaving *prārabdha* alone. The body is said to continue in the functions for which it has taken its birth. That is *prārabdha*. But from the *jnāni's* point of view there is only the Self which manifests in such variety. There is no body or *karma* apart from the Self, so that the actions do not affect him.

D.: Is there not *dehātma buddhi* (I am the body idea) for the *jnāni*? If, for instance, Sri Bhagavan be bitten by an insect, is there no sensation?

M.: There is the sensation and there is also the *dehātma buddhi*. The latter is common to both *jnāni* and *ajnāni* with this difference, that the *ajnāni* thinks *dehaiva Ātma* (only the body is myself), whereas the *jnāni* knows all is of the Self (*Atmamayam sarvam*), or (*sarvam khalvidam Brahma*) all this is Brahma. If there be pain let it be. It is also part of the Self. The Self is *poorna* (perfect).

Now with regard to the actions of the *jnāni*, they are only so-called because they are ineffective. Generally the actions get imbedded as *samskāras* in the individual. That can be only so long as the mind is fertile, as in the case of the *ajnāni*. With a *jnāni* the mind is only surmised; he has already transcended the mind. Because of his apparent activity the mind has to be inferred in his case, and that mind is not fertile like that of an *ajnāni*. Hence it is said that a *jnāni's* mind is Brahman. Brahman is certainly no other than the *jnāni's* mind. The *vāsanās* cannot bear fruit in that soil. His mind is barren, free from *vāsanās*, etc.

However, since *prārabdha* was conceded in his case, *vāsanās* also must be supposed to exist. If they exist they are only for enjoyment (*bhogahetu*). That is to say, actions bear twofold fruits, the one for enjoyment of their fruits and the other leaving an impress on the mind in the form of *samskāras* for subsequent manifestation in future births. The *jnāni's* mind being barren cannot entertain seeds of *karma*. His *vāsanās* simply exhaust themselves by activities ending in enjoyment only (*bhogahetuka karma*). In fact, his *karma* is seen only from the *ajnāni's* standpoint. He remains actionless only. He is not aware of the body as being apart from the Self. How can there be liberation (*mukti*) or bondage (*bhanda*) for him. He is beyond both. He is not bound by *karma*, either now or ever. There is no *jivanmukta* or *videha-mukta* according to him.

D.: From all this it looks as if a *jnāni* who has scorched all the *vāsanās* is the best and that he would remain inactive like a stock or stone.

M.: No, not necessarily. *Vāsanās* do not affect him. Is it not itself a *vāsanā* that one remains like a stock or stone? *Sahaja* is the state.

384. The conversation turned on *vāsanās*. Sri Bhagavan said that good tendencies and bad ones (*Suvāsanā* and *Kuvāsanā*) are concomitant—the one cannot exist without the other. Maybe that the one class predominates. Good tendencies (*Suvāsanā*) are cultivated and they must also be finally destroyed by *jnāna*.

A young prodigy was mentioned. Sri Bhagavan remarked that latent impressions of previous births (*purvajanma samskāra*) were strong in him.

D.: How does it manifest as the ability to cite well-known saints? Is it *vāsanā* in the form of a seed only?

M.: Yes. Predisposition (*samskāra*) is acquired knowledge and kept in stock. It manifests under favourable circumstances. One with strong *samskāra* understands the thing when presented to him much quicker than another with no *samskāra* or weak *samskāra*.

D.: Does it hold good with inventors also?

M.: "There is nothing new under the Sun." What we call inventions or discoveries are merely rediscoveries by competent men with strong *samskāra* in the directions under consideration.

D.: Is it so with Newton, Einstein, etc.?

M.: Yes. Certainly. But the *samakāras*, however strong, will not manifest unless in a calm and still mind. It is within the experience of everyone that his attempts to rake up his memory fail, whereas something flashes in the mind when he is calm and quiet. Mental quiet is necessary even for remembrance of forgotten things. The so-called genius is one who worked hard in his past births and acquired knowledge and kept it in store as *samskāras*. He now concentrates his mind until it merges in the subject. In that stillness the submerged ideas flash out. That requires favourable conditions also.

6th Arpil 1937

385. Mr. Venkata Rao, an Andhra gentleman, in the course of conversation with Sri Bhagavan, was told :

"Until you gain *jnāna* you cannot understand the state of a *jnāni*. There is no use asking about the work of Isvara and the rest. Some ask why Siva went naked in Daruka forest and spoiled the chastity of the Rishis' wives. The Puranas which record this incident have also said that Siva had previously saved the Devas and the universe by consuming the poison Halahala at the time of churning the ocean of milk. He, who could save the world from the deadly poison and lead the sages to emancipation, had also wandered nude amongst their women. Their actions are incomprehensible to ordinary intellects. One must be a *jnāni* to understand a *jnāni* or Isvara."

D.: Should we not learn the *jnāni's* ways and imitate them?

M.: It is no use. *Vāsanās* are of four kinds :

(1) Pure (*Suddha*), (2) Impure (*Malina*), (3) Mixed (*Madya*) and (4) Good (*Sat*), according as the *jnānis* are the Supreme (*Varishta*), the best (*Variya*), better (*Vara*), and good (*Vit*). Their fruits are reaped in three ways : (1) of our own will (*Swechha*), and by others' will (*Parechha*) and involuntarily (*Anichha*). There have been *jnānis* like Gautama, Vyāsa, Suka and Janaka.

D.: Was Vyasa also a *jnāni* ?

M.: Yes. Certainly.

D.: Why then did the bathing angels don clothes when he appeared before them, but not when Suka passed ?

M.: That same Vyasa sent Suka to Janaka for instruction ; Suka was tested by Janaka and finally he returned convinced of Vyasa's greatness.

D.: Is *jnāna* the same as *arudha* ?

M.: So it is.

D.: What is the relation between *bhakti* and *jnāna* ?

M.: Eternal, unbroken, natural state is *jnāna*. Does it not imply love of Self ? Is it not *bhakti* ?

D.: Idol worship does not seem good. They worship the formless God in Islam.

M.: What is their conception of God ?

D.: As Immanence, etc.

M.: Is not God even then endowed with attributes ? Form is only one kind of attribute. One cannot worship God without some notions. Any *bhāvana* premises a God with attributes (*Saguna*). Moreover, where is the use of discussing the form or formlessness of God? Find out if you have a form. You can then understand God.

D.: I admit I have no form.

M.: All right. You have no form in sleep, but in the waking state you identify yourself with a form. See which is your real state. That is understood to be without form on investigation. If you know your Self to be formless by your *jnāna*, should you not concede the same amount of *jnāna* to God and understand Him to be formless ?

D.: But there is the world for God.

M.: How does the world apppear ? How are we ? Knowing this, you know God. You will know if He is

Siva, or Vishnu or any other or all put together.

D.: Is *Vaikuntha* in *Paramapada,* i.e. in the transcended Self?

M.: Where is *Paramapada* or *Vaikuntha* unless in you?

D.: *Vaikuntha,* etc., appear involuntarily.

M.: Does this world appear voluntarily?

The questioner returned no answer.

M.: The self-evident 'I', ignoring the Self, goes about seeking to know the not-Self. How absurd!

D.: This is Sankhya Yoga. Being the culmination of all kinds of other yogas, how can it be understood to start with? Is not *bhakti* antecedent to it?

M.: Has not Sri Krishna started the "Gita" with Sankhya?

D.: Yes. I understand it now.

386. *D.*: In Sri Ramakrishna's "*Life*" it is said that an idol, Ramlal, was animate. Is it true?

M.: Can you account for the animation of this body? Is the movement of the idol more mysterious than the movement of this body?

D.: Metal does not move by itself.

M.: Is not the body a corpse? You will probably consider it a mystery if the corpse moves. Is that so?

387. Three persons came on a short visit; the eldest of them asked: There is one process of creation mentioned in the Upanishads and another in Puranas. Which of them is true?

M.: They are many, and meant to indicate that the creation has a cause and a creator should be posited so that one might seek the cause. The emphasis is on the purpose of the theory and not on the process of creation. Moreover, the creation is perceived by some one. There are no objects without the subject, *i.e.*, the objects do not come and tell you that they are, but it is you who says that there are the objects. The objects are therefore what the seer makes of them. They have no existence independent of the subject. Find out who you are and then you understand what the world is. That is the object of the theory.

D.: The soul is only a small particle whereas the creation is so huge. How can we surmise it?

M.: The particle speaks of the huge creation; where is the contradiction?

388. Later Sri Bhagavan continued:

There are so many theories, scriptural and scientific. Have they reached any finality? They cannot. Brahman is said to be subtler than the subtlest, wider than the widest. *Anu* is an atom, infinitesimal. It ends in subtle perception. This subtlety is of the *sukshma* body, *i.e.*, the mind. Beyond the mind there is the Self. The greatest of things are also conceptions, the conceptions are of the mind; beyond the mind there is the Self. So the Self is subtler than the subtlest.

There may be any number of theories of creation. All of them extend outwardly. There will be no limit to them because time and space are unlimited. They are however only in the mind. See the mind; time and space are transcended and the Self is realised.

Creation is explained scientifically or logically to one's own satisfaction. But is there any finality about it? Such explanations are called *krama srishti* (gradual creation). On the other hand, *drishti srishti* (simultaneous or sudden creation) is *yugapad srishti.* Without the seer there are no objects seen. Find the seer and the creation is comprised in him. Why look outward and go on explaining the phenomena which are endless?

389. With regard to presents to Sri Bhagavan, He observed: Why do they bring presents? Do I want them? Even if I refuse they thrust presents on me?

What for? If I accept them I must yield to their wishes. It is like giving a bait to catch the fish. Is the angler anxious to feed the fish? No, he is anxious to feed on the fish.

Swami Lokesananda, a Sanyasi: What is meant by *jnāna* and *vijnāna*?

M.: These words may mean differently according to the context. *Jnāna* = *sāmānya jnāna* or Pure consciousness. *Vijnāna* = Visesha *jnāna*. *Visesha* may be (1) worldly (relative knowledge); and (2) transcendental (Self-Realisation).

Mind is necessary for *Visesha*; it modifies the purity of absolute consciousness. So *Vijnāna* represents intellect and the sheath composing it, *i.e.*, relative knowledge. In that case *jnāna* is common (*sāmānya*) running through *vijnāna, samjnāna, prajnāna, ājnāna, mati, dhriti*—different modes of knowledge (*vide Aitareyopanishad*, Chapter 3) or *jnāna* is *paroksha* (hearsay) and *vijnāna* is *aparoksha* (direct perception) as in *jnāna vignāna triptātma*, one perfectly content with *jnāna* and *vijnāna*.

D.: What is the relation between Brahman and Iswara?

M.: Brahman is called Iswara in relation to the world.

D.: Is it possible to speak to Iswara as Sri Ramakrishna did?

M.: When we can speak to each other why should we not speak to Iswara in the same way?

D.: Then why does it not happen with us?

M.: It requires purity and strength of mind and practice in meditation.

D.: Does God become evident if the above conditions exist?

M.: Such manifestation is as real as your own reality. In other words, when you identify yourself with the body as in *jāgrat* you see gross objects ; when in subtle body or in mental plane as in *svapna,* you see objects equally subtle ; in the absence of identification as in *sushupti* you see nothing. The objects seen bear a relation to the state of the seer. The same applies to visions of God.

By long practice the figure of God, as meditated upon, appears in dream and may later appear in *jāgrat* also.

D.: Is that the state of God-realisation ?

M.: Listen to what happened once years ago :

There was a saint by name Nāmdev. He could see, talk and play with Vithoba as we do with one another. He used to spend most of his time in the temple playing with Vithoba.

On one occasion the saints had assembled together, among whom was one Jnāndev of well-established fame and eminence. Jnāndev asked Ghora Kumbar (a potter-saint) to use his proficiency in testing the soundness of baked pots and find out which of the assembled saints was properly baked clay. So Ghora Kumbar took his stick and gently struck each one's head in joke as if to test. When he came to Namdev the latter protested in a huff ; all laughed and hooted. Namdev was enraged and he sought Vithoba in the temple. Vithoba said that the saints knew best ; this unexpected reply upset Namdev all the more.

He said : " You are God. I converse and play with you. Can there be anything more to be gained by man ? "

Vithoba persisted : " The saints know."

Namdev : Tell me if there is anything more real than you.

Vithoba : We have been so familiar with each other that my advice will not have the desired effect on you. Seek the beggar-saint in the forest and know the truth.

Accordingly Namdev sought out the particular saint mentioned by Vithoba. Namdev was not impressed with the holiness of the man for he was nude, dirty and was lying on the floor with his feet resting on a Linga. Namdev wondered how this could be a saint. The saint, on the other hand, smiled on Namdev and asked, "Did Vithoba send you here?" This was a great surprise to Namdev who was now more inclined to believe the man to be great. So Namdev asked him: "You are said to be a saint, why do you desecrate the Linga?" The saint replied: "Indeed I am too old and weak to do the right thing. Please lift my feet and place them where there is no Linga." Namdev accordingly lifted the saint's feet and placed them elsewhere. But there was again a Linga below them. Wherever the feet were placed then and there appeared a Linga underneath. Namdev finally placed the feet on himeslf and he turned into a Linga. Then Namdev understood that God was immanent and learnt the truth and departed. He went home and did not go to the temple for several days. Vithoba now sought him out in his home and asked why Namdev would not go to the temple to see God. Namdev said: "Is there a place where He is not?"

The moral of the story is clear. Visions of God have their place below the plane of Self-Realisation.

390. *D.*: When I read Sri Bhagavan's works I find that investigation is said to be the one method for Realisation.

M.: Yes, that is *vichāra*.

D.: How is that to be done?

M.: The questioner must admit the existence of his self. "I AM" is the Realisation. To pursue the clue till Realisation is *vichāra*. *Vichāra* and Realisation are the same.

D.: It is elusive. What shall I meditate upon?

M.: Meditation requires an object to meditate upon, whereas there is only the subject without the object in *vichāra*. Meditation differs from *vichāra* in this way.

D.: Is not *dhyāna* one of the efficient processes for Realisation?

M.: *Dhyāna* is concentration on an object. It fulfils the purpose of keeping away diverse thoughts and fixing the mind on a single thought, which must also disappear before Realisation. But Realisation is nothing new to be acquired. It is already there, but obstructed by a screen of thoughts. All our attempts are directed for lifting this screen and then Realisation is revealed.

If a true seeker is advised to meditate, many may go away satisfied with the advice. But some one among them may turn round and ask, "Who am I to meditate on an object?" Such an one must be told to find the Self. That is the finality. That is *vichāra*.

D.: Will *vichāra* alone do in the absence of meditation?

M.: *Vichāra* is the process and the goal also. 'I AM' is the goal and the final Reality. To hold to it with effort is *vichāra*. When spontaneous and natural it is Realisation.

391. The same Sanyasi visitor, Swami Lokesananda, asked about *samādhi*.

M.: (1) Holding on to Reality is *samādhi*.
(2) Holding on to Reality with effort is *savikalpa samādhi*.
(3) Merging in Reality and remaining unaware of the world is *nirvikalpa samādhi*.
(4) Merging in Ignorance and remaining unaware of the world is sleep. (Head bends but not in *samādhi*).
(5) Remaining in the primal, pure natural state without effort is *Sahaja Nirvikalpa Samādhi*.

They can be further subdivided thus :

SAVIKALPA SAMADHI		NIRVIKALPA SAMADHI	
(Bāhya) External	*(Antar)* Internal	*(Bāhya)* External	*(Antar)* Internal
(Drisyānuvidha) The mind jumps from one object to another. Keep it steady, fixed on the Reality behind them.	The mind is afflicted by Kama, Krodha, etc. See wherefrom they arise and how they have their being. Hold on to their source.	Merging in the one Reality underlying all the phenomena and remaining unaware of the transitory manifestations. This state is compared to the waveless ocean whose waters are still and placid.	Merging in the Inmost Being which is the One Reality giving rise to all thoughts, etc., and remaining unaware of anything else. This state is compared to a flame unagitated by current of air, but burning quite steady.
(Sabdānuvidha) There are the external phenomena which are said to have their origin from the Single Reality. Search for It and hold on to It.	There are all manner of thoughts which rise up from the Reality within and manifest themselves. Hold on to that Reality.		
All these four kinds of *Savikalpa Samādhi* are attended with effort.		When these kinds of *Nirvikalpa Samādhi* are not attended with effort and it is realised that the waveless ocean of external *samādhi* and the steady flame of internal *samādhi* are identical, the state is said to be *Sahaja Nirvikalpa Samādhi*.	

D.: It is said that one remaining in Nirvikalpa Samadhi for 21 days must necessarily give up the physical body.

M.: Samadhi means passing beyond *dehātma buddhi* ("I am the body idea") and non-identification of the body with the Self is a foregone conclusion.

There are said to be persons who have been immersed in Nirvikalpa Samadhi for a thousand years or more.

392. (Swamiji) continued another series of questions.)

D.: They say that Kundalini must be roused before Realisation and that its awakening makes the body feel hot. Is that so?

M.: The yogis call it Kundalini Sakti. It is the same as *vritti* of the form of God (*Bhagavatākara vritti**) of the *bhaktas*, and *vritti* of the form of Brahma (*Brahmākara vritti*) of the *jnānis*. It must be preliminary to Realisation. The sensation produced may be said to be hot.

D.: Kundalini is said to be of the shape of a serpent but *vrittis* cannot be so.

M.: The Kundalini of *jnāna mārga* is said to be the Heart, which is also described in various ways as a network of *nādis*, of the shape of a serpent, of a lotus bud, etc.

D.: Is this Heart the same as the physiological heart?

M.: No, "*Sri Ramana Gita*" defines it as the origin of the 'I'-thought.

D.: But I read that it is on the right of the chest.

M.: It is all meant to help the *bhāvana* (imagery). There are books dealing with six centres (*shadchakra*) and many other *lakshyas* (centres), internal and external. The description of the Heart is one among so many *lakshyas*. But it is not necessary. It is only the source of the 'I'-thought. That is the ultimate truth.

**vritti*=mode of mind.

D.: May we take it to be the source of the *antahkaranas* (inner organs)?

M.: The inner organs (*antahkaranas*) are classified as five: (1) Knowledge—*Jnāna;* (2) Mind—*Manas;* (3) Intellect—*Buddhi;* (4) Memory—*Chitta;* and (5) The ego—*Ahankāra;* some say only the latter four; others say only two, namely (1) *Manas,* mind and (2) *Ahankāra,* the ego; still others say the *Antahkarana* is only one whose different functions make it appear differently and hence its different names. Heart is thus the source of the *Antahkaranas.*

There is the body which is insentient; there is the Self which is eternal and self-luminous; in between the two there has arisen a phenomenon, namely the ego, which goes under these different names, mind (*manas*), intellect (*buddhi*), memory (*chitta*), the ego (*ahankāra*), power (*sakti*), life current (*prāna*), etc. Seek your source; the search takes you to the Heart automatically. The *antahkaranas* are only ideas (*kalpana*) to explain the subtle body (*sukshma sarira*). The physical body (*sarira*) is made up of the elements: earth, air, fire, water and ether; it is insentient. The Self is pure and self-luminous and thus self-evident. The relation between the two is sought to be established by positing a subtle body, composed of the subtle aspects of the five elements on the one hand; and the reflected light of the Self on the other. In this way the subtle body which is synonymous with the mind, is both sentient and insentient, *i.e., ābhāsa.* Again, by the play of the pure quality (*satva guna*) on the elements, their brightness (*satva* aspect) manifests as the mind (*manas*) and the senses (*jnānendriyas*): by the play of *rajas* (active quality), the *rajo* (active) aspect manifests as life (*prāna*) and limbs (*karmendriyas*); by the play of dullness (*tamas*) the *tama* (dark) aspect manifests as the gross phenomena of the body, etc.

D.: But the mind is reputed to have these three qualities also.

M.: Yes. There is purity (*satva*) in *satva* (in the pure quality); activity in it (*rajas* in *satva*); and dullness also (*tamas* in *satva*); and so on. *Suddha satva* is quite pure; *misra* (mixed) *satva* is a combination of *satva* with other qualities. The quality *satva* implies only its predominance over the other two qualities.

Later Sri Bhagavan continued: The intricate maze of philosophy of different schools is said to clarify matters and reveal the Truth. But in fact they create confusion where no confusion need exist. To understand anything there must be the Self. The Self is obvious. Why not remain as the Self? What need to explain the non-self?

Take the *Vedānta* for instance:—They say there are fifteen kinds of *prāna*. The student is made to commit the names to memory and also their functions. The air goes up and is called *prāna;* goes down and is called *apāna;* operates the *indriyas* and is called something. Why all this? Why do you classify, give names and enumerate the functions, and so on? Is it not enough to know that one *prāna* does the whole work?

The *antahkarana* thinks, desires, wills, reasons, etc., and each function is attributed to one name such as mind, intellect, etc. Has anyone seen the *prānas* or the *antahkaranas?* Have they any real existence? They are mere conceptions. When and where will such conceptions end?

Consider the following:—

A man sleeps. He says on waking that he slept. The question is asked: "Why does he not say in his sleep that he is sleeping?" The answer is given that he is sunk in the Self and cannot speak, like a man who has dived in water to bring out something from the bottom.

The diver cannot speak under water; when he has actually recovered the articles he comes out and speaks. Well, what is the explanation?

Being in water, water will flow into his mouth if he were to open the mouth for speaking. Is it not simple? But the philosopher is not content with this simple fact. He explains, saying that fire is the deity presiding over speech; that it is inimical to water and therefore cannot function! This is called philosophy and the learners are struggling to learn all this! Is it not sheer waste of time? Again the Gods are said to preside over the limbs and senses of the individual (*vyashti*). They are the limbs and senses of *Virat* (*samashti*). So they go on explaining. *Hiranyagarbha,* etc. Why should confusion be created and then explained away? Ah! Fortunate is the man who does not involve himself in this maze!

I was indeed fortunate that I never took to it. Had I taken to it, I would probably be nowhere—always in confusion. My *purva vāsanās* (former tendencies) directly took me to the enquiry "Who am I?" It was indeed fortunate!

11th April, 1937

393. *D.:* There is a short account of the spiritual experiences of St. Theresa, in the March number of the "*Prabhuddha Bhārata.*" She was devoted to a figure of the Madonna which became animated to her sight, and she was in bliss. Is it the same as *Saktipata?*

M.: The animated figure indicates depth of meditation (*dhyāna bhala*). *Saktipata* prepares the mind for introversion. There is a process of concentration of mind on one's own shadow which in due course becomes animated and answers questions put to it. That is due to strength of mind or depth of meditation. Whatever is external is also transitory. Such phenomena may produce joy for the time being. But abiding peace, i.e. *sānti,* does not result. This is got only by the removal of *avidyā* (ignorance).

394. *D.:* How is the mind to be stilled?

M.: Looking at the mind with the mind, or fixing the mind in the Self, brings the mind under control of the Self.

D.: Is there any yoga, i.e. a process for it?

M.: *Vichāra* (investigation) alone will do.

395. *D.:* How is *Poorna Brahma* to be attained? What is the method best suited to a *grihasta?*

M.: You have already said *poorna,* i.e. perfection. Are you apart from *poorna?* If apart from it will it be *poorna?* If not apart how does the question arise? The knowledge that Brahma is *poorna* and that you are not apart from the same is the finality. See it and you will find that you are not a *grihasta* or any limited being.

D.: What are the *tatvas?*

M.: Knowledge of *Poorna Brahma* will elucidate the other matters automatically.

12th April, 1937

396. A Dutch lady, Mrs. Gongrijp, an ardent theosophist, who had worked long in Java and is now living in Adyar, came here for a short visit. She asked:

Theosophy speaks of *tanha,* meaning thirst for rebirth. What is its cause?

M.: Thirst for rebirth is the desire to be reborn so as to end successive births. The spirit is at present moribund; it must be revived so that rebirth may take place after the present apparent death. Forgetfulness of your real nature is the present death; remembrance of it is the rebirth. It puts an end to successive births. Yours is eternal life.

D.: I take *tanha* to mean 'clinging to life'—the desire for eternal life.

M.: No doubt it is so. How does the desire arise? Because the present state is unbearable. Why? Because it is not your true nature. Had it been your real nature no desire would disturb you. How does the present state differ from your real nature? You are spirit in truth. However that spirit is wrongly identifying itself with the gross body. The body has been projected by the mind; the mind itself has originated from the spirit. If the wrong identification ceases, there will be peace and permanent untellable bliss.

D.: Life is of the body and rebirth is to incarnate in another body.

M.: Mere change of body produces no effect. The ego associated with this body is transferred to another body. How can that satisfy any one?

Moreover, what is life? Life is existence which is your Self. That is life Eternal. Otherwise can you imagine a time when you are not?

That life is now conditioned by the body and you wrongly identify your being with that of the body. You are life unconditioned. These bodies attach themselves to you as mental projections and you are now afflicted by "I-am-the-body" idea. If this idea ceases you are your Self.

Where or how were you before being born? Were you in sleep? How were you? You exist then too without the body. Then the ego arises, and then the mind which projects the body. "I-am-the-body" idea is the result. Because the body exists you say that it was born and that it will die, and transfer the idea to the self saying that you are born and that you will die. In fact you remain without the body in sleep; but now you remain with the body. The Self can remain without the body, but the body cannot exist apart from the Self.

"I-am-the-body" thought is ignorance; that the body is not apart from the Self is knowledge. That is the difference between knowledge and ignorance.

The body is a mental projection; the mind is the ego; and the ego rises from the Self. So the body-thought is distracting and strays away from the Self. For whom is the body or the birth? It is not for the Self, the Spirit. It is for the non-self which imagines itself separate. So long as there is the sense of separation there will be afflicting thoughts. If the original source is regained and the sense of separation is put an end to, there is peace.

Consider what happens when a stone is thrown up. It leaves its source and is projected up, tries to come down and is always in motion until it regains its source, where it is at rest. So also the waters of the ocean evaporate, form clouds which are moved by winds, condense into water, fall as rain and the waters roll down the hill in streams and rivers until they reach their original source, the ocean, reaching which they are at peace. Thus, you see, wherever there is a sense of separateness from the source there is agitation and movement until the sense of separateness is lost. So it is with yourself. Now that you identify yourself with the body you think that you are separate from the Spirit—the true Self. You must regain your source before this false identity ceases and you are happy.

Gold is not an ornament, but the ornament is nothing but gold. Whatever shape the ornament may assume and however different the ornaments are, there is only one reality, namely gold. So also with the bodies and the Self. The single reality is the Self. To identify oneself with the body and yet to seek happiness is like attempting to cross a river on the back of an alligator. The body identity is due to extroversion and the wandering of the mind. To continue in that state will only keep one in an endless tangle and there will be no peace. Seek your source, merge in the Self and remain all alone.

Rebirth means discontent with the present state, and desire to be born where there will be no discontent. Births, being of the body, cannot affect the Self. The Self remains over even after the body perishes. The discontent is due to the wrong identity of the Eternal Self with the perishable body. The body is a necessary adjunct of the ego. If the ego is killed the eternal Self is revealed in all its glory.

The body is the Cross. Jesus, the son of man, is the ego or 'I-am-the-body' idea. When he is crucified, he is resurrected as the Glorious Self—Jesus, the Son of God!

"GIVE UP THIS LIFE IF THOU WOULDST LIVE."

397. *D.:* Fear is consequent on the possibility of non-existence. It pertains to the body. One is not aware of the body in sleep. One is not afraid of, but courts, sleep, whereas one dreads death. Why is this difference between the two outlooks?

M.: Desire of sleep or fear of death are when the mind is active and not in the respective states themselves. The mind knows that the body entity persists and reappears after sleep. Therefore sleep is not attended with fear but the pleasure of non-bodily existence is sought. Whereas the mind is not sure of reappearance after the so-called death and dreads it.

14th April, 1937

398. Dandapani, a resident devotee now on a North Indian tour, sent an extract from the "*Modern Psycho-*

logical Review" which stated that the Dynamical centre of the Heart is on the right and not on the left whereas the physical organ is on the left.

Conversation followed on that subject.

M.: The *yoga-mārga* speaks of the six centres each of which must be reached by practice and transcended until one reaches *sahasrāra* where nectar is found and thus immortality. The yogis say that one enters into the *parānādi* which starts from the sacral plexus whereas the *jnānis* say that the same *nādi* starts from the heart. Reconciliation between the seemingly contradictory statements is effected in the secret doctrine which distinctly states the yogic *parānādi* is from *mulādhāra* and the *jnāna parānādi* is from the Heart. The truth is that the *parānādi* should be entered. By yogic practice one goes down, then rises up, wanders all through until the goal is reached; by *jnāna abhyās* one settles down directly in the centre.

D.: Is not *parā* followed by *pasyanti*, etc.?

M.: You are speaking of *vāk* which is divided into (1) *para*, (2) *pasyanti*, (3) *madhyama* and (4) *vaikhari*; *Vāk* is *prāna sakti* whereas the mind is *tejorupa* or *chit sakti*. The *sakti* is the manifestation of the unmanifest origin.

The yogis attach the highest importance to going up to *sahasrāra* i.e. the brain centre or the thousand-petalled lotus. Some yogis say that there are other centres higher up with greater involutions e.g. 100,000 (100) petalled or 100,000,000 (108) petalled ones. Let us omit them for the present. They point out the scriptural statement that the life-current enters the body through the fontanelle and argue that, *viyoga* (separation) having come about that way, *yoga* (union) must also be effected in the reverse way. Therefore we must by yoga practice, gather up the *prānas* and enter the fontanelle for the consummation of yoga. The *jnānis* point out that the yogi assumes the existence of the body, its separateness from the Self, and therefore advises effort for reunion by the practice of yoga.

In fact, the body is in the mind which has the brain for its seat, which again functions by light borrowed from another source as admitted by the yogis themselves in their fontanelle theory. The *jnāni* further argues: 'if the light is borrowed it must come from its native source. Go to the source direct and do not depend on borrowed resources. Just as an iron ball comes into being separate from the mass of iron, gets fiery in fire, later cools down giving up the fire, but must again be made fiery to reunite with the original mass, so also the cause of separation must also form the factor of re-union.

Again if there is an image reflected there must be a source and also accessories like the Sun and a pot of water for reflection. To do away with the reflection either the surface is covered up corresponding to reaching the fontanelle according to the yogis or the water is drained away which is called *tapas* (*Tapo Brahmāsti—tapas* is Brahma). That is to say, the thoughts or the brain activities are made to cease. This is *jnāna-mārga.*

All these are however on the assumption that the *jiva* is separate from the Self or Brahman. But are we separate? "No," says the *jnāni*. The ego is simply wrong identity of the Self with the non-self, as in the case of a colourless crystal and its coloured background. The crystal though colourless appears red because of its background. If the background is removed the crystal shines in its original purity. So it is with the Self and the *antahkaranas.*

Still again the illustration is not quite appropriate. For the ego has its source from the Self and is not separate like the background from the crystal. Having its source from the Self, the ego must only be retraced in order that it might merge in its source.

The centre of the ego and its core is called the Heart, the same as the Self.

A gentleman asked if the yogis also reach the *anāhata* and thus realise the Heart-centre as is done by the *jnānis* but in a different way.

M.: *Anāhata* is not the same as the Heart-centre. If so, why should they wander further on to *Sahasrāra*? Moreover, the question arises because of the sense of separateness persisting in us. We are never away from the Heart-centre. Before reaching *anāhata* or after passing it, one is only in the centre. Whether one understands it or not, one is not away from the centre. Practice of yoga or *vichāra* is done, always remaining in the centre only.

D.: What is to be our *sādhana*?

M.: *Sādhana* for the *Sādhaka* is the *Sahaja* of the *Siddha*. *Sahaja* is the original state, so that *sādhana* amounts to the removal of the obstacles to the realisation of this abiding truth.

D.: Is concentration of mind one of the *sādhanas*?

M.: Concentration is not thinking one thing. It is, on the other hand, putting off all other thoughts which obstruct the vision of our true nature. All our efforts are only directed to lifting the veil of ignorance. Now it appears difficult to quell the thoughts. In the regenerate state it will be found more difficult to call in thoughts. For are there things to think of? There is only the Self. Thoughts can function only if there are objects. But there are no objects. How can thoughts arise at all?

The habit makes us believe that it is difficult to cease thinking. If the error is found out, one would not be fool enough to exert oneself unnecessarily by way of thinking.

D.: Is not grace more effective than *abhyāsa*?

M.: Guru simply helps you in the eradication of ignorance. Does he hand over Realisation to you?

D.: We are ignorant.

M.: In as much as you say you are ignorant, you are wise. Is he a madman who says that he is mad?

Guru's Grace is like a hand extended to help you out of water, or it makes your way easier for the removal of ignorance.

D.: Is it not like a medicine to cure the disease of *avidyā*?

M.: What is medicine for? It is only to restore the patient to the original state of health. What is this talk of Guru, Grace, God, etc.? Does the Guru hold you by the hand and whisper something in your ear? You imagine him to be like yourself. Because you are with a body you think that he is also a body in order to do something tangible to you. His work lies within. How is Guru gained? God, who is immanent, in his Grace takes pity on the loving devotee and manifests Himself as a being according to the devotee's standard. The devotee thinks that he is a man and expects relationship as between bodies. But the Guru, who is God or Self incarnate, works from within, helps the man to see the error of his ways, guides him in the right path until he realises the Self within.

After such realisation the disciple feels, "I was so worried before. I am after all the Self, the same as before but not affected by anything; where is he who was miserable? He is nowhere to be seen."

What should we do now? Only act up to the words of the master, work within. The Guru is both within and without. So he creates conditions to drive you inward and prepares the interior to drag you to the centre.

Thus he gives a push from without and exerts a pull from within so that you may be fixed at the centre.

In sleep you are centred within. Simultaneously with waking your mind rushes out, thinking this, that and all else. This must be checked. It is possible only for the agent who can work both within and without. Can he be identified with a body? We think that the world can be conquered by our efforts. When frustrated externally and driven internally, we feel "Oh! oh! There is a power higher than man." The existence of the higher power must be admitted and recognised. The ego is a very powerful elephant and cannot be brought under control by anyone less than a lion, who is no other than the Guru in this instance; whose very look makes the elephant tremble and die. We will know in due course that our glory lies where we cease to exist. In order to gain that state, one should surrender oneself saying "LORD! Thou art my Refuge!" The master then sees "This man is in a fit state to receive guidance," and so guides him.

D.: What is Self-surrender?

M.: It is the same as self-control; control is effected by removal of *samskāras* which imply the functioning of the ego. The ego submits only when it recognises the Higher Power. Such recognition is surrender, or submission is self-control. Otherwise the ego remains stuck up like the image carved on a tower, making a pretence by its strained look and posture that it is supporting the tower on its shoulders. The ego cannot exist without the Power but thinks that it acts of its own accord.

D.: How can the rebellious mind be brought under control?

M.: Either seek its source so that it may disappear or surrender that it may be struck down.

D.: But the mind slips away from our control.

M.: Be it so. Do not think of it. When you recollect yourself bring it back and turn it inward. That is enough.

No one succeeds without effort. Mind control is not one's birth-right. The successful few owe their success to their perseverance.

A passenger in a train keeps his load on the head by his own folly. Let him put it down; he will find the load reaches the destination all the same. Similarly, let us not pose as the doers, but resign ourselves to the guiding Power.

D.: Swami Vivekananda says that a spiritual Guru can transfer spirituality substantially to the disciple.

M.: Is there a substance to be transferred? Transfer means eradication of the sense of being the disciple. The master does it. Not that the man was something at one time and metamorphosed later into another.

D.: Is not Grace the gift of the Guru?

M.: God, Grace and Guru are all synonymous and also eternal and immanent. Is not the Self already within? Is it for the Guru to bestow It by his look? If a Guru thinks so, he does not deserve the name.

The books say that there are so many kinds of *diksha* (initiations—*hasta diksha, sparsa diksha, chakshu diksha, mano diksha,* etc.) They also say that the Guru makes some rites with fire, water, *japa, mantras,* etc. and call such fantastic performances *dikshas,* as if the disciple (*sishya*) becomes ripe only after such processes are gone through by the Guru.

If the individual is sought he is nowhere to be found. Such is the Guru. Such is Dakshinamurti. What did he do? He was silent; the disciples appeared before him. He maintained silence, the doubts of the disciples were dispelled, which means that they lost their individual identities. *That is jnāna* and not all the verbiage usually associated with it.

Silence is the most potent form of work. However vast and emphatic the sastras may be they fail in their effect. The Guru is quiet and Peace prevails in all. His silence is more vast and more emphatic than all the sastras put together. These questions arise because of the feeling, that having been here so long, heard so much, exerted so hard, one has not gained anything. The work proceeding within is not apparent. In fact the Guru is always within you.

Thāyumanavar says: "Oh Lord! Coming with me all along the births, never abandoning me and finally rescuing me!" Such is the experience of Realisation.

Srimad Bhagavad-Gita says the same in a different way, "We two are not only now but have ever been so."

D.: Does not the Guru take a concrete form?

M.: What is meant by *concrete?* Because you identify your being with your body, you raise this question. Find out if you àre the body.

The Gita says: *param bhāvam ajānantah* (Bh. Gita ix-11)—that those who cannot understand the transcendental nature (of Sri Krishna) are fools, deluded by ignorance.

The master appears to dispel that ignorance. As Thāyumanavar puts it, he appears as a man to dispel the ignorance of a man, just as a deer is used as a decoy to capture the wild deer. He has to appear with a body in order to eradicate our ignorant "I-am-the-body" idea.

15th April, 1937

399. Mr. Bose, the Bengali Engineer, has since read "*Gaudapada Kārikas*" and Sir S. Radhakrishnan's "*Indian Philosophy*" and so asked questions as follows:

D.: Is there any genuine difference between dream experience and waking state?

M.: Because you find the dream creations transitory in relation to the waking state there is said to be a difference. The difference is only apparent and not real.

D.: Is the waking state independent of existing objects?

M.: Were it so, the objects must exist without the seer; that is to say, the object must tell you that it exists. Does it do so? For example, does a cow moving in front of you say that she is moving? Or do you say of your own accord "There is a cow moving"? The objects exist because of the seer cognising them.

D.: Gaudapada in "*Mandukya Kārika*" says that there is no difference between the two states from the standpoint of Reality-Absolute.

M.: Of course not.

D.: I believe Bhagavan also says so. Prof. Radhakrishnan in his "*Indian Philosophy*" says that in his Brahma Sutra Commentary Sri Sankara makes a distinction between the two states. Is it a fact? If so, what is it? How can there be any distinction from the viewpoint of reality? So long as the mind exists in any form there will be distinction. But from the standpoint of *Atman,* non-dual Brahman, can there be any distinction?

M.: The dream is for the one who says that he is awake. In fact, wakefulness and dream are equally unreal from the standpoint of the Absolute.

D.: In pure *Advaita* can evolution, creation or manifestation have any place? What about the theory of *Vichāra* according to which Brahman appears as the world without forfeiting its essential nature, like the rope appearing as snake?

M.: There are different methods of approach to prove the unreality of the universe. The example of the dream is one among them. *Jāgrat*, *swapna* and *sushupti* are all treated elaborately in the scriptures in order that the Reality underlying them might be revealed. It is not meant to accentuate differences among the three states. The purpose must be kept clearly in view.

Now they say that the world is unreal. Of what degree of unreality is it? Is it like that of a son of a barren mother or a flower in the sky, mere words without any reference to facts? Whereas the world is a fact and not a mere word. The answer is that it is a superimposition on the one Reality, like the appearance of a snake on a coiled rope seen in dim light.

But here too the wrong identity ceases as soon as the friend points out that it is a rope. Whereas in the matter of the world, it persists even after it is known to be unreal. How is that? Again the appearance of water in a mirage persists even after the knowledge of the mirage is recognized. So it is with the world. Though knowing it to be unreal, it continues to manifest.

But the water of the mirage is not sought to satisfy one's thirst. As soon as one knows that it is a mirage, one gives it up as useless and does not run after it for procuring water.

D.: Not so with the appearance of the world. Even after it is repeatedly declared to be false one cannot avoid satisfying one's wants from the world. How can the world be false?

M.: It is like a man satisfying his dream wants by dream creations. There are objects, there are wants and there is satisfaction. The dream creation is as purposeful as the *jāgrat* world and yet it is not considered real.

Thus we see that each of these illustrations serves a distinct purpose in establishing the stages of unreality. The realised sage finally declares that in the regenerate state the *jāgrat* world also is found to be as unreal, as the dream world is found to be in the *jāgrat* state.

Each illustration should be understood in its proper context; it should not be studied as an isolated statement. It is a link in a chain. The purpose of all these is to direct the seeker's mind towards the one Reality underlying them all.

D.: Is there that difference in the philosophy of Sankara and Gaudapada which the learned Professor wants us to believe?

M.: The difference is only in our imagination.

D.: Sir S. Radhakrishnan writes:

"The general idea pervading Gaudapada's work that bondage and liberation, the individual soul and the world are all unreal, makes a caustic critic observe that the theory which has nothing better to say than that an unreal soul is trying to escape from an unreal Supreme Good, may itself be an unreality. It is one thing to say that the unchangeable reality expressing itself in the changing universe without forfeiting its nature is a mystery, and another to dismiss the whole changing universe as a mere mirage. If we have to play the game of life we cannot do so with the conviction that the play is a show and all the prizes in it are mere blanks. No philosophy can consistently hold such a theory and be at rest with itself. The greatest condemnation of such a theory is that we are obliged to occupy ourselves with objects the existence and value of which we are continually denying in theory. It only shows that there is something else which includes and transcends the world but it does not imply the world is a dream."

M.: As was already said, the purpose of the whole philosophy is to indicate the underlying Reality whether of the *jāgrat, svapna* and *sushupti* states, or the individual souls, the world and God.

There are three outlooks possible :—

(1) *The Vyāvahārika* : The man sees the world in all its variety, surmises the creator and believes in himself as the subject. All these are thus reduced to the three fundamentals, *jagat, jiva* and Isvara. He learns the existence of the creator and tries to reach him in order to gain immortality. If one is thus released from bondage, there are all other individuals existing as before who should work out their own salvation. He more or less admits the One Reality underlying all these phenomena. The phenomena are due to the play of *māyā*. *Māyā* is the *sakti* of Isvara or the activity of Reality. Thus, existence of different souls, objects, etc., do not clash with the *advaitic* point of view.

(2) *The Prātibhāsika* : The *jagat, jiva* and Isvara are all cognised by the Seer only. They do not have any existence independent of him. So there is only one *jiva*, be it the individual or God. All else is simply a myth.

(3) *The Pāramārthika* : *i.e.* the *ajātavāda* (no-creation doctrine) which admits of no second. There is no reality or absence of it, no seeking or gaining, no bondage or liberation, and so on.

The question arises why then do all the *sāstras* speak of the Lord as the creator ? How can the creature that you are create the creator and argue that the *jagat, jiva* and Isvara are mental conceptions only ?

The answer is as follows :—

You know that your father of this *jāgrat* state is dead and that several years have elapsed since his death. However you see him in your dream and recognise him to be your father, of whom you were born and who has left patrimony to you. Here the creator is in the creature. Again, you dream that you are serving a king and that you are a part in the administrative wheel of the kingdom. As soon as you wake up all of them have disappeared leaving you, the single individual, behind. Where were they all? Only in yourself. The same analogy holds in the other case also.

D.: In the *Vyāvahārika,* above mentioned, how does *māyā* come in?

M.: *Māyā* is only Isvara,—*Sakti* or the activity of Reality.

D.: Why does it become active?

M.: How can this question arise? You are yourself within its fold. Are you standing apart from that universal activity in order to ask this question? The same Power is raising this doubt in order that all doubts may finally cease.

D.: The dream world is not purposeful as the *jāgrat* world, because we do not feel that wants are satisfied.

M.: You are not right. There are thirst and hunger in dream also. You might have had your fill and kept over the remaining food for the next day. Nevertheless you feel hungry in dream. This food does not help you. Your dream-hunger can be satisfied only by eating dream-food. Dream-wants are satisfied by dream-creations only.

D.: We recollect our dreams in our *jāgrat* but not *vice versa.*

M.: Not right again. In the dream you identify yourself with the one now speaking.

D.: But we do not know that we are dreaming as apart from waking as we do now.

M.: The dream is the combination of *jāgrat* and *sushupti.* It is due to the *samskāras* of the *jāgrat* state. Hence we remember dreams at present. *Samskāras* are not formed contrariwise; therefore also we are not aware of the dream and *jāgrat* simultaneously. Still everyone will recollect strange perplexities in dream. One wonders if he dreams or is awake. He argues and determines that he is only awake. When really awake, he finds that it was all only a dream.

400. In the course of another conversation Sri Bhagavan said : Photisms add zest to meditation and nothing more.

16th April, 1937

401. Mr. Krishnamurti, an Andhra gentleman, asked as follows :—When we make *tapas*, on what object must we fix our sight ? Our mind is fixed on what we utter.

M. : What is *tapas* for ?

D. : For Self-Realisation.

M. : Quite so. *Tapas* depends on the competency of the person. One requires a form to contemplate. But it is not enough. For can anyone keep looking at an image always ? So the image must be implemented by *japa*. *Japa* helps fixing the mind on the image, in addition to the eyesight. The result of these efforts is concentration of mind, which ends in the goal. He becomes what he thinks. Some are satisfied with the name of the image. Every form must have a name. That name denotes all the qualities of God. Constant *japa* puts off all other thoughts and fixes the mind. That is *tapas*. One-pointedness is the *tapas* wanted.

The question what *tapas* is was asked in order to know what purpose to serve. It will take the form required for the purpose.

D. : Are not physical austerities also *tapas* ?

M. : May be one form of it. They are due to *vairāgya* (dispassion).

D.: I have seen a man with his arm lifted all his life.

M.: That is *vairāgya.*

D.: Why should one afflict his body for the purpose ?

M.: You think it is affliction whereas it is a vow and for the other man it is an achievement and a pleasure.

Dhyāna may be external or internal or both. *Japa* is more important than external form. It must be done until it becomes natural. It starts with effort and is continued until it proceeds of itself. When natural it is called Realisation.

Japa may be done even while engaged in other work. That which is, is the One Reality. It may be represented by a form, a *japa, mantra, vichāra* or any kind of attempt. All of them finally resolve themselves into that One single Reality. *Bhakti, vichāra, japa* are only different forms of our efforts to keep out the unreality. Unreality is an obsession at present. Reality is our true nature. We are wrongly persisting in unreality, that is, thoughts and worldly activities. Cessation of these will reveal the Truth. Our attempts are directed towards keeping them out. It is done by thinking of the Reality only. Although it is our true nature it looks as if we are thinking of the Reality. What we do really amounts to the removal of obstacles for the revelation of our true Being. Meditation or *vichāra* is thus a reversion to our true nature.

D.: Are our attempts sure to succeed ?

M.: Realisation is our nature. It is nothing new to be gained. What is new cannot be eternal. Therefore there is no need for doubting if one would lose or gain the Self.

16th April, 1937

402. While speaking of the Brain and the Heart Sri Bhagavan recalled an incident of old days as follows :—

Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni once argued that the brain was the most important centre and Sri Bhagavan maintained that the Heart was even more so. There were others watching the discourse. A few days after Sri Bhagavan received a letter containing a short poem in English on that discourse from a young boy, N. S. Arunachalam, who had not yet matriculated.

That poem is remarkable for its poetic imagination. Sri Bhagavan, Kavyakantha, and the assemblage of other persons are represented as the Heart, the brain and the body respectively, and again as the Sun, the Moon and the Earth also. The light from the Sun is reflected on the Moon and the Earth is illumined. Similarly the brain acts by consciousness derived from the Heart and the body is thus protected. This teaching of Sri Bhagavan is found in "*Ramana Gita*" also. The Heart is the most important centre from which vitality and light radiate to the brain, thus enabling it to function. The *vāsanās* are enclosed in the Heart in their subtlest form, later flowing to the brain which reflects them highly magnified corresponding to a cinema-show at every stage. That is how the world is said to be nothing more than a cinema-show.

Sri Bhagavan also added :—

Were the *vāsanās* in the brain instead of in the Heart they must be extinguished if the head is cut off so that re-incarnations will be at an end. But it is not so. The Self obviously safeguards the *vāsanās* in its closest proximity, *i.e.* within itself in the Heart, just as a miser keeps his most valued possessions (treasure) with himself and never out of contact. Hence the place where the *vāsanās* are is the Self, *i.e.* the Heart, and not the brain (which is only the theatre for the play of the *vāsanās* from the green-room of the Heart).

17th April, 1937

403. There was some reference to the extract from the "*Modern Psychological Review,*" wondering if any instruments could be of use in detecting the Heart-centre and if proper subjects were available for recording the experience of the adepts in the spiritual path, and so on. Others were speaking. Sri Bhagavan said: In the incident mentioned in the book "*Self-Realisation*" that I became unconscious and symptoms of death supervened, I was all along aware. I could feel the action of the physical heart stopped and equally the action of the Heart-centre unimpaired. This state lasted about a quarter of an hour.

We asked if it was true that some disciples have had the privilege of feeling Sri Bhagavan's Heart-centre to be on the right by placing their hands on Sri Bhagavan's chest. Sri Bhagavan said, "Yes."

(Mr. Viswanatha Iyer, Narayana Reddi and others have said they felt Sri Bhagavan's Heart-centre to be on the right by placing their hands on his chest.)

A devotee rightly observed that if hands could feel and locate the Heart-centre, delicate scientific instruments should certainly do it.

D.: The Heart is said to be on the right, on the left or in the centre. With such differences of opinion how are we to meditate on *Hridaya*?

M.: You are and it is a fact. *Dhyāna* is by you, of you, and in you. It must go on where you are. It cannot be outside you. So you are the centre of *dhyāna* and that is the Heart.

A location is however given to it with reference to the body. You know that you *are*. Where are you? You are in the body and not out of it. Yet not the whole body. Though you pervade the whole body still you admit of a centre wherefrom all your thoughts start and wherein they subside. Even when the limbs are amputated you are there but with defective senses. So a centre must be admitted. That is called the Heart. The Heart is not merely the centre but the Self. Heart is only another name for the Self.

Doubts arise only when you identify it with something tangible and physical. The scriptures no doubt describe it as the source of 101 *nādis*, etc. In "*Yoga Vasishta*" Chudala says that Kundalini is composed of 101 *nādis*, thus identifying one with the other.

Heart is no conception, no object for meditation. But it is the seat of meditation; the Self remains all alone. You see the body in the Heart, the world in it. There is nothing separate from it. So all kinds of effort are located there only.

18th April, 1937

404. A casual visitor asked:

What is *nishtā?* How is the look to be directed between the eyebrows?

M.: How do we see these things? There is a light by which these are seen. Your question amounts to asking how that light is seen.

D.: What is the significance of the spot between the eyebrows?

M.: That is mentioned as if to say: "Do not see with your eyes."

D.: What is regulation of breath for?

M.: Only to control the mind.

Again after a few minutes Sri Bhagavan continued: The mind functions both as light and as objects. If divested of things the light alone will remain over.

D.: But we must know that there is such light.

M.: Sight or cognition is impossible without such light. How do you cognise anything in sleep? Our cognition pertains to the present state because there is light. Light is the essential requisite for sight. It is plain in our daily life. Among the lights, Sunlight is the most important. Hence they speak of the glory of millions of Suns.

D.: There is light if we press the eyelids with our fingers.

Another questioner: What is the use of seeing such a Light?

M.: It is done lest we forget the goal. The practice helps one not to divert the attention to other pursuits.

The object is seen or the light is recognised because there is the subject to do so. How does it affect the subject whether the objects are seen or not? If the light, *i.e.* the cogniser or the consciousness is seen, there will be no object to be seen. Pure light, *i.e.* Consciousness, will alone remain over.

D.: Why then is the regulation of breath necessary?

M.: Control of breath or its regulation is only for controlling the mind so that the mind may not wander away.

D.: Is it for control of mind only?

M.: It is not enough that light is seen; it is also necessary to have the mind engaged in a single activity, *e.g.* the elephant trunk and the chain.

D.: How long will it take for one to gain *Chintāmani* (the celestial gem granting all the wishes of its owner)?

M.: The example of *Chintāmani* is found in "*Yoga Vasishta.*" *Chintāmani* signifies the Real nature of the Self. The story is as follows :—

A man was making *tapasya* for gaining *Chintāmani.* A gem mysteriously fell into his hands. He thought that it could not be *Chintāmani* because his efforts had been too short and too little to gain the gem. He discarded it and continued the *tapas.* Later a *sādhu* placed before him a brilliant pebble with facets cut. The man was taken in by its appearance but found that it could not fulfil his desires as he originally supposed. Similarly, the Self, being inherent, should not be sought for elsewhere.

Again, an elephant used to be often teased by its keeper. He once had an accident and fell down. The elephant could have killed him on the spot but did not do so. Later, however, the keeper dug a big pit in the forest and killed the elephant.

Chudala illustrated Sikhidhvaja's error by this story. He had *vairagya* even while ruling his Kingdom and could have realised the Self if only he had pushed his *vairāgya* to the point of killing the ego. He did not do it, but came to the forest, had a time-table of *tapas* and yet did not improve even after 18 years of *tapas.* He had made himself a victim of his own creation. Chudala advised him to give up the ego and realise the Self which he did and was liberated.

It is clear from Chudala's story that *vairāgya* accompanied by ego is of no value, whereas all possessions in the absence of ego do not matter.

19th April, 1937

405. A respectable and orthodox gentleman asked about Sri Chakra.

M.: It has a deep significance. There are 43 corners with sacred syllables in them. Its worship is a method for concentration of mind. The mind is wont to move externally. It must be checked and turned within. Its habit is to dwell on names and forms, for all external objects possess names and forms. Such names and forms are made symbolic of mental conceptions in order to divert the mind from external objects and make it dwell within itself. The idols, *mantras, yantras,* etc., are all meant to give food to the mind in its introvert state, so that it may later become capable of being concentrated, after which the superb state is reached automatically.

20th April, 1937

406. Mr. Cohen, a resident disciple, has been for some days past thinking about a book called "*Nirvana*" written by a prominent Theosophist, wherein the author claims to reach *Nirvana* every night after going to sleep. He claims to see his own Master and other Masters of the Theosophical Society as bright lights within the ocean of light which is *Nirvana*. He asked Sri Bhagavan how it could be possible, considering the *Advaitic* teaching that the *Nirvanic* experience is the same as that of the pure consciousness of Being.

M.: *Nirvana* is Perfection. In the Perfect State there is neither subject nor object; there is nothing to see, nothing to feel, nothing to know. Seeing and knowing are the functions of the mind. In *Nirvana* there is nothing but the blissful pure consciousness "I am."

D.: How then can a prominent T. S. leader, who claims clairvoyance of a high order, praise the author for his supposed correct and vivid description of *Nirvana*, and why is the T. Society so much obsessed by the idea of "Service"?

M.: Well, Theosophy and other kindred movements are good in as much as they make a man unselfish and prepare him for the highest truth. Service, like prayers, *japa,* and even business done in God's name, lead to the highest goal—Self-Realisation.

D.: But after how long? and why should a man who is ready for the Absolute knowledge stick to the knowledge of the Relative?

M.: Everything happens in its own time. The one who is ready for the absolute knowledge will be made somehow to hear of it and follow it up. He will realise that *Atmavidya* is the highest of all virtues and also the end of the journey.

D.: Then he asked about the difference between external and internal *nirvikalpa samādhis,* referring to article 391 above.

M.: External *samādhi* is holding to the Reality while witnessing the world, without reacting to it from within. There is the stillness of a waveless Ocean. The internal *samādhi* involves loss of body-consciousness.

D.: Is loss of body-consciousness a prerequisite to the attainment of *sahaja samādhi?*

M.: What is body-consciousness? Analyse it. There must be a body and consciousness limited to it which together make up body-consciousness. These must lie in another Consciousness which is absolute and unaffected. Hold it. That is *samādhi.* It exists when there is no body-consciousness because it transcends the latter, it also exists when there is the body-consciousness. So it is always there. What does it matter whether body-consciousness is lost or retained? When lost it is internal *samādhi;* when retained, it is external *samādhi.* That is all.

A person must remain in any one of the six *samādhis* so that *sahaja samādhi* may be easy for him.

D.: The mind does not sink into that state even for a second.

M.: A strong conviction is necessary that I am the Self, transcending the mind and the phenomena.

D.: Nevertheless, the mind proves to be a cork against attempts to sink it.

M.: What does it matter if the mind is active? It is so only on the substratum of the Self. Hold the Self even during mental activities.

D.: I cannot go within sufficiently deep.

M.: What does it matter if the mind is active? It not in the Self? Where should you go? All that is necessary is the stern belief that you are the Self. Say rather that the other activities throw a veil on you.

D.: Yes, it is so.

M.: That means that the conviction is weak.

D.: I understand that the 'I' is only artificial (*krtrma*), my attempts at realising the real 'I' are unavailing because the artificial 'I' is brought into action for realising the other.

M.: "*Viveka Chudāmani*" makes it clear that the artificial 'I' of the *vijnāna kosha* is a projection and through it one must look to the significance (*vāchya*) of 'I', the true principle.

407. *D.*: St. Theresa and others saw the image of Madonna animated. It was external. Others see the images of their devotion floating in their mental sight. This is internal. Is there any difference in degree in these two cases?

M.: Both indicate that the person has strongly developed meditation. Both are good and progressive. There is no difference in degree.

The one has a conception of divinity and draws mental images and feels them. The other has the conception of divinity in the image and feels it in the image. The feeling is within in both instances.

21st April, 1937

408. With reference to the location of the Heart centre on the right side of the human body, Sri Bhagavan said :—

I had been saying all along that the Heart centre was on the right, notwithstanding the refutation by some learned men that physiology taught them otherwise. I speak from experience. I knew it even in my home during my trances. Again during the incident related in the book "*Self-Realisation*" I had a very clear vision and experience. All of a sudden a light came from one side erasing the world vision in its course until it spread all round when the vision of the world was completely cut out. I felt the muscular organ on the left had stopped work ; I could understand that the body was like a corpse, that the circulation of blood had stopped and the body became blue and motionless. Vasudeva Sastri embraced the body, wept over my death, but I could not speak. All the time I was feeling that the Heart centre on the right was working as well as ever. This state continued 15 or 20 minutes. Then suddenly something shot out from the right to the left resembling a rocket bursting in air. The blood circulation was resumed and normal condition restored. I then asked Vasudeva Sastri to move along with me and we reached our residence.

The Upanishads say that 101 *nadis* terminate in the Heart and 72,000 originate from them and traverse the body. The Heart is thus the centre of the body. It can be felt in the absence of the body also. It is said to be a centre because we have been accustomed to think that we remain in the body. In fact the body and all else are in that centre only.

REMINISCENCES :

409. A middle-aged man prostrated himself before Sri Bhagavan, who asked him about his well-being. After a few minutes Sri Bhagavan recalled an incident saying that this was the only person whom Sri Bhagavan had slapped ; it happened about 30 years earlier.

Sri Bhagavan was living in Mulaippal Tirtha. There was a Jada Swami living in the neighbourhood (Mamarathu Guhai). This man, who was then about 8 years of age, used to play pranks with all, including Sri Bhagavan. One day he went to Maharshi and said that Jada Swami wanted a bucket. Without waiting for permission, he took away the bucket. Palani Swami the attendant, was not there. So Sri Bhagavan followed the boy to Jada Swami's place. Before Bhagavan reached the place the boy had told the other that Brahmanaswami had sent him a bucket. Jada Swami was wondering why. In a few minutes Maharshi reached the place and learnt what had passed. So he raised His hand to give a slap to the boy but the mind would not yield to slapping. But He argued within Himself and determined that the urchin should be slapped and so he did it.

410. There is a Tamil stanza by Avvai. It is an address of the *prāna* to the stomach ; its meaning is :

"O stomach ! How difficult it is to get on with you ! You cannot starve when no food is available, nor can you take more and keep it in reserve when food is in plenty ! You will take only what you want and when you want ; thus you are troublesome to me, allowing me no rest."

Sri Bhagavan altered it thus : Stomach addressing the *prāna* : "O *Prāna* !. How troublesome you are to me ! You never allow me to rest but continue loading me with food off and on. It is so difficult to get on with you."

Saying it Sri Bhagavan laughed. Sri Bhagavan often says that He is made to eat more than is good for Him.

21st May, 1937

411. Sri Bhagavan, while speaking of the marriage ceremony among the Brahmins, said that the *Kāsiyātra* represents the bridegroom to be a *vairāgi-purusha.* It is therefore right that he should be given a *kanyā* (virgin) for leading a householder's life. It follows that a *vairāgi* can alone be a good householder.

412. Once on a cold day Sri Bhagavan was sitting in a cave on the hill with His hands folded on the breast as a protection against the cold. Some Andhra visitor had come ; he broke a cocoanut and poured the cold juice on Sri Bhagavan's head as *abhisheka ;* Sri Bhagavan was surprised.

413. A visitor asked :

While making *nāma-japa* and after continuing it for an hour or more I fall into a state like sleep. On waking up, I recollect that my *japa* has been interrupted. So I proceed again.

M.: "Like sleep". That is right. It is the natural state. Because you are now associated with the ego you consider the natural state to be something which interrupts your work. You must repeat the experience until you realise that it is your natural state. You will then find that *japa,* etc., is extraneous. Still, it will be going on automatically. Your present doubt is due to the false identity.

Japa means clinging to one thought to the exclusion of all other thoughts. That is the purpose of *japa* ; it leads to *dhyāna* which ends in Self-Realisation.

414. Mr. G. V. Subbaramiah, a devotee, has written some short poems which are interesting. Some of them

refer to a child. Sri Bhagavan said God becomes a child, and *vice versa*. That means that the *samskāras* are yet latent in the child and thus its innocence is complete. When they are eradicated even a grown up man becomes a child once again, and thus remains God.

The author said: The child creates the 'home' atmosphere.

Sri Bhagavan: Yes. The children are always in the 'home'. We too are there but are dreaming and imagining that we are outside the home.

Sri Bhagavan added: I have rendered the word "youth" (*yuva*) in "*Dakshinamurti Stotra*" by "child" (*bāla*). This seems more appropriate.

To be reborn is to become children over again. One must be reborn before gaining *jnāna*, *i.e.* recovering the natural state.

415. Sri Bhagavan read out some stanzas on the greatness of the Tamil language from the preface to a Tamil—Tamil Dictionary and explained the references in a very interesting manner. Of the three tests for establishing the superiority of Saivism over Jainism, the first related to Tirujnanasambandar entering the Royal presence for curing the Pandya king of his illness. The queen was anxious because of his tender age, *i.e.* 12 years. Tirujnanasambandar set her doubts at rest by composing a stanza which said that, though tender, he was more than a match to the strong group of innumerable Jains. While reciting the stanza Sri Bhagavan choked and could not proceed with it.

The second test was the fire leaving the cadjan leaf unburnt and the third the cadjan leaves opposing the current of the river (Tiruvedakam).

Sri Bhagavan also related the story of God Isvara begging food as an old man, taking food as a youth and saving the devotee woman as a babe, all at once.

He again pointed out 'like babe, lunatic, spirit' (*Bālonmathapisāchavat*) describing the states of *jnānis*. There babe (*bāla*) is given precedence over others.

416. Sri Bhagavan said that "*Kamba Ramayana*" consists of 12,000 stanzas to Valmiki's 24,000. Kamba's can be understood only by the learned and not by all. Tulasidas had heard "*Kamba Ramayana*" recited to him in Hindi by a Tamil saint and later wrote his famous Ramayana.

417. "*The Perfect Master*" is a book on Meher Baba published in 1937. There is an incident of a ship's officer instructing the reluctant Immigration Officer to let Baba and his party land in New York, U.S.A. When one of the party went to thank him he was nowhere to be found.

The incident is recorded so as to leave an impression of a miracle happening in favour of Baba. The passage was read out to Sri Bhagavan.

He said: Yes, yes, what of that?

D.: Is it a miracle?

M.: May be. But did not the Immigration Officer recognise the other to be his superior officer whose orders should be obeyed? There is an end of the matter. If a man of Baba's party could not find him—well, it may be due to several reasons.

418. Asked if Sri Bhagavan had read "*Kamba Ramayana*", Sri Bhagavan said: No. I have not read anything. All my learning is limited to what I learnt before my 14th year. Since then I have had no inclination to read or learn. People wonder how I speak of "*Bhagavad Gita*", etc. It is due to hearsay. I have not read "*Gita*" nor waded through commentaries for its meaning. When I hear a sloka I think that its meaning is clear and I say it. That is all and nothing more. Similarly with my other quotations. They come out naturally. I realise that the Truth is beyond speech and intellect.

Why then should I project the mind to read, understand and repeat stanzas, etc.? Their purpose is to know the Truth. The purpose having been gained, there is no use engaging in studies.

Some one remarked: If Sri Bhagavan had been inclined to study there would not be a saint to-day.

M.: Probably all my studies were finished in past births and I was surfeit. There is therefore no *samskāra* operating now in that direction.

419. The week before the Mahapuja (3rd June, 1937) has brought many visitors including some relatives of Sri Bhagavan. There is among them an elderly lady —the widow of Subbier in whose house Sri Bhagavan was living when he left home in August 1896. Old memories revived when Sri Bhagavan saw her.

He remembered how on a festive occasion he was asked to help her in making some *modakas* (delicacies), but he hesitated and finally refused, because he was obliged to change his clothes and he could put on only *koupina* (loin-cloth or cod-piece) which made him feel shy. He was reprimanded by his uncle and this lady. The uncle's wife said with humility and gentleness: "Quite. No wonder that one destined for this High State could not do such humble work in those days."

Then Sri Bhagavan remarked, "If I refused to wear *koupina* once, I am now made to pay the penalty by wearing it always."

The lady recalled to her mind how Sri Ramana was suffering from head-ache for several days together.

Sri Bhagavan said:—Yes, yes! It was the month before I left Madura. It was not head-ache, but an inexpressible anguish which I suppressed at the time; there were however the outward symptoms which, I said, were due to head-ache. I remember how anxious you grew on account of my "head-ache". You used to rub some ointment on my forehead every day. My anguish continued until I left Madura and reached this place.

4th June, 1937

420. A certain lawyer from Cuddalore quoted as follows :—

"Neither the sun shines there, nor the moon, nor the stars, nor lightning. How can fire shine there? All these luminaries shine in His Light only. With His Light, all these shine forth!" He asked, what does 'with His Light' mean here? Does all else shine on account of Him, or in His Light?

Sri Bhagavan said: There is only He. He and His Light are the same. There is no individual to perceive other things, because the perceiver and the perceived are only He. The sun, the moon, etc., shine forth. How? Do they come and tell you that they shine forth or does another apart from them say that they shine forth?

D.: Of course I say that they shine forth.

M.: Therefore they shine on account of you. Again consciousness is necessary to know that they shine forth. That consciousness is your Self or you. So then you or your consciousness is the same as He and His Light by which all else shine forth.

D.: Is that Light like sunlight?

M.: No. The sunlight is *jada* (insentient). You are aware of it. It makes objects perceptible and chases away darkness, whereas consciousness is that Light which makes not only light but also darkness perceptible. Darkness cannot exist before sunlight, but it can remain in the Light of consciousness. Similarly, this consciousness is pure Knowledge in which both knowledge and ignorance shine.

D.: If God is all why does the individual suffer for his actions? Are not the actions prompted by Him for which the individual is made to suffer?

M.: He who thinks he is the doer is also the sufferer.

D.: But the actions are prompted by God and the individual is only His tool.

M.: This logic is applied only when one suffers, but not when one rejoices. If the conviction prevails always, there will be no suffering either.

D.: When will the suffering cease?

M.: Not until individuality is lost. If both the good and bad actions are His, why should you think that the enjoyment and suffering are alone yours? He who does good or bad, also enjoys pleasure or suffers pain. Leave it there and do not super-impose suffering on yourself.

421. A resident devotee, Kunju Swami, related an observation of Sri Maharshi after the robbery in the Ashramam in 1923.

Some disciples were asking why the robbers should be allowed to molest even *sādhus* and why the *sādhus* would not protect themselves and their dependents from the robbers.

Sri Bhagavan observed: There were rishis like Visvamitra who could duplicate the universe if they wished. They lived during the life time of Ravana who caused agony even to Sita and Rama among others. Could not Visvamitra have destroyed Ravana by his occult powers? Though capable he kept still. Why? The occurrences are known to the sages, but pass away without leaving an impression on their minds. Even a deluge will appear a trifle to them; they do not care for anything.

7th June, 1937

422. Dr. Venkata Rao, a visitor from Guntur, asked: A Guru asks his disciple to do things contrary to ethical principles. But the disciple, having accepted the person as the master, desires to please the master but his moral sense obstructs him. What should he do under the circumstances?

(No reply).

I shall make myself clear. The Guru asked his disciple to commit a theft and the disciple did not do it. The master then said, "I wanted to test you to see if you had completely surrendered yourself or retained your individuality. It is now clear what it is." Is the Guru right in ordering the disciple that way?

(Still no reply).

Another person observed:

There are persons on whom I refuse to sit in judgment. Still I cannot help feeling if they deserve the appellation of *Gurus*. They appear bogus men. If they be really worthy they would not order the disciples in that way.

M.: But the person says, "It is for a test."

The questioner continued: Should it be carried out?

M.: Your original statement contains the answer to your question.

Both the questioners jointly asked: The action is disagreeable. Can it be done?

M.: The question might be referred to the person himself, *i.e.* the Guru. He is responsible for the situation.

423. A young man asked:—I try to cultivate will-power but do not succeed. How should I do it?

(No answer).

D.: I came here three years ago and Sri Bhagavan said that will-power is necessary for strength of mind. Since then I have been desiring to cultivate it but without success.

(No answer).

D.: During these years I have had 4 or 5 reverses. They upset me considerably. There is always the fear of failure haunting my attempts. This results in want of faith in myself which certainly foredooms my efforts to failure. Nothing in fact succeeds like success; and also nothing foils one's attempts like failure. Hence my question.

(No answer).

D.: Is not will-power necessary for success? It should ensure success and also rule out failure.

(No answer).

D.: I try to gain will-power. After these years I find myself only where I began. There is no progress.

(No answer).

D.: What are the means for gaining will-power?

M.: Your idea of will-power is success insured. Will-power should be understood to be the strength of mind which makes it capable of meeting success or failure with equanimity. It is not synonymous with certain success. Why should one's attempts be always attended with success? Success develops arrogance and the man's spiritual progress is thus arrested. Failure on the other hand is beneficial, in as much as it opens the eyes of the man to his limitations and prepares him to surrender himself. Self-surrender is synonymous with eternal happiness. Therefore one should try to gain the equipoise of mind under all circumstances. That is will-power. Again, success or failure are the results of *prārabdha* and not of will-power. A man may be doing only good and noble actions and yet prove a failure. Another may do otherwise and yet be uniformly successful. This does not mean that the will-power is present in the one and not in the other.

D.: Is it not said in the book "*Truth Revealed*" (*Ulladu Narpadu*) that the world is a product of the mind?

M.: Yes.

D.: Does it not follow that the mind grown strong brings the world under control?

M.: The mind in its external activities gives rise to the world. Such activities fritter away the strength of the mind. Its strength lies in being confined to itself with the external activities arrested.

D.: There is an idiot who cannot count up to ten. His mind does not certainly wander as does that of a thinker. Is the former a better man than the latter?

M.: Who says that he is an idiot? Your mind in its wandering says so.

D.: Is will-power gained by divesting oneself of thoughts?

M.: Rather by confining oneself to a single thought. Ultimately this will also disappear, leaving Pure Consciousness behind. Concentration helps one to it.

D.: So then, it is gained by directing the mind and concentrating it. The personality has nothing to do with it.

M.: Personality is the root-cause of external activities. It must sink for gaining the highest good.

424. In the course of conversation with a learned man who asked about *Purusha* and *Prakriti*, Sri Bhagavan said:

Purusha and *Prakriti* are only the bifurcation of the one Supreme. They are surmised because the student has the sense of duality deep rooted. The same "*Gita*" also says that *Purushottama* lies beyond *Purusha* and *Prakriti*.

D.: What are *parā-nādi, sushumna nādi* and the Heart?

M.: "But *sushumna* resolves into the *parā*". ("*Sushumnātu pareleena*"). Heart is usually undertsood to be the muscular organ lying on the left of the chest. The Modern Psychological Review speaks of the physical organ on the left and the Heart centre on the right. The Bible says that a fool's heart is on the left and a wise man's on the right. "*Yoga Vasishta*" says that there are two hearts; the one is *Samvit*; and the other the blood-vessel.

D.: What is *anāhata*?

M.: *Anāhata* is the *chakra* lying behind the heart. It is *not Samvit*. "*Lalita Sahasranama*" has it, *anāhata chakrasthāyai namo namah* (Salutations to the core situated in *Anāhata*) and the next mantra *Hrit* (in the Heart). Thus it is clear that *anāhata* is not the same at *Hrit*.

425. Will-power or any other is gained by practice (*abhyāsa*).

D.: Is success not dependent on Guru's Grace?

M.: Yes, it is. Is not your practice itself due to such Grace? The fruits are the result of the practice and follow it automatically. There is a stanza in "*Kaivalya*" which says, "O Guru! You have been always with me watching me through several reincarnations, and ordaining my course until I was liberated." The Self manifests externally as Guru when occasion arises; otherwise He is always within, doing the needful.

12th June, 1937

426. Mr. Das, of Allahabad University: Has the food which one usually takes anything to do with increase or decrease of one's spirituality? That is, does it influence spirituality for good or bad?

M.: Yes. *Satvic* food in moderate quantity is helpful to spiritual development.

D.: For a *Grihi, i.e.* a man of the world (householder), what conduct in life will help him *most* spiritually?

M.: *Dhyāna* or *bhakti,* which mean the same thing.

D.: What is meant by taking the name of God? How to reconcile the following two ideas?

The Bible says: "Do not take the name of God in vain."

The Hindu Sastras enjoin taking the name of God all the time.

M.: One should not use the name of God artificially and superficially without feeling. To use the name of God one must call upon Him and surrender to Him unreservedly. After such surrender the name of God is constantly with the man.

D.: What are the fundamental tests for discovering men of great spirituality, since some are reported to behave like insane people?

M.: The *jnāni's* mind is known only to the *jnāni.* One must be a *jnāni* oneself in order to understand another *jnāni.* However the peace of mind which permeates the saint's atmosphere is the only means by which the seeker understands the greatness of the saint.

His words or actions or appearance are no indications of his greatness, for they are ordinarily beyond the comprehension of common people.

D.: Has man any Free Will or is everything in his life predestined and pre-ordained?

M.: Free-Will holds the field in association with individuality. As long as individuality lasts so long there is Free-Will. All the *sāstras* are based on this fact and they advise directing the Free-Will in the right channel.

Find out to whom Free-Will or Destiny matters. Abide in it. Then these two are transcended. That is the only purpose of discussing these questions. To whom do these questions arise? Find out and be at peace.

D.: Are intellect and emotion, like the physical body, growths with the birth of man; and do they dissolve or survive after death?

M.: Before considering what happens after death, just consider what happens in your sleep. Sleep is only the interval between two waking states. Do they survive that interval?

D.: Yes, they do.

M.: The same holds good for death also. They represent body-consciousness and nothing more. If you are the body they always hold on to you. If you are not the body they do not affect you. The one who was in sleep is now in waking state just speaking. You were not the body in sleep. Are you the body now? Find it out. Then the whole problem is solved.

Similarly, that which is born must die. Whose is the birth? Were you born? If you say you were, of whose birth are you speaking? It is the body which was born and it is that which will die. How do birth and death affect the eternal Self?

Think and say to whom the questions arise. Then you will know.

427. *D.*: It is said that the Universe consists of light and sound. Are these two constituents like the light and sound in the physical world? Can they be seen and

heard with the physical organs—eye and ear? Or are they to be experienced only subjectively?

M.: Light and sound correspond to *nāda* and *bindu* in *Tantrik* terminology, and to the mind and life-current in the *Vedantic*. They are gross, subtle and transcendental. The organs can perceive the gross aspect; the other aspects are not so perceptible. The subtle can be inferred and the transcendental is only transcendental.

D.: Hinduism lays down reincarnation of the *jiva*. What happens to the *jiva* during the interval between the death of one body and the birth of the next one?

M.: Solve this question by referring to the state of sleep. What happens to you in sleep?

D.: I do not know.

M.: Yet you exist. Therefore existence beyond knowledge and ignorance is indicated. Although ignorance was prevailing, according to your present idea, yet you did not say so in sleep. You continued to exist all the same. Mere ignorance does not rule out the fact of your existence.

D.: In the practice of meditation are there any signs, of the nature of subjective experience or otherwise, which will indicate the aspirant's progress towards Self-Realisation?

M.: The degree of freedom from unwanted thoughts and the degree of concentration on a single thought are the measure to gauge the progress.

D.: Is it necessary to take to *sanyāsa* for Self-Realisation?

M.: *Sanyāsa* is to renounce one's individuality. This is not the same as tonsure and ochre robes. A man may be a *grhi*; yet, if he does not think he is a *grhi*, he is a *sanyāsi*. On the contrary a man may wear ochre robes and wander about; yet if he thinks he is a *sanyāsi* he is not that. To think of *sanyāsa* defeats its own purpose.

Sri Bhagavan remarked:

People see the world. The perception implies the existence of a seer and the seen. The objects are alien to the seer. The seer is intimate, being the Self. They do not however turn their attention to finding out the obvious seer but run about analysing the seen. The more the mind expands, the farther it goes and renders Self-Realisation more difficult and complicated. The man must directly see the seer and realise the Self.

D.: So then, it amounts to synthesizing phenomena and finding the one Reality behind.

M.: Why do you still consider the phenomena? See who the seer is. Synthesis means engaging the mind in other pursuits. That is not the way to Realisation.

D.: I want to eliminate the non-self so that the Self may be realised. How shall I do it? What are the characteristics of the non-self?

M.: There is one who says that the non-self must be eliminated. Who is he?

D.: I mean this man. When I travel from Calcutta to Madras I must know Madras so that I may not alight at an intermediate station out of ignorance. There are the sign boards and the time-table to guide me in my travel. But what is the guide in my search for the Self?

M.: It is all right for the journey. You know how far away you are from Madras. Can you tell me how far away you are from the Self in order that you should seek it?

D.: I do not know.

M.: Are you ever divorced from the Self? Is it possible to be so divorced? Are not all these alien to you and the Self the most intimate? Where should you go to gain the Self?

D.: I am now away from the Self. I must retrace my steps in order to regain It.

M.: How far away? Who says that he is apart? Can there be two selves?

D.: It is said that individuals are modifications of the Self, just as ornaments are of gold.

M.: When a man speaks in terms of ornaments ignoring their substance gold, he is told that they are gold. But here the man is consciousness and speaks of himself as its modification. Do you remain apart from Self that you speak of yourself as Its modification?

D.: Cannot gold be imagined to say that it has become an ornament?

M.: Being insentient, it does not say so. But the individual is sentient and cannot function apart from consciousness. The Self is Pure Consciousness. Yet the man identifies himself with the body which is itself insentient and does not say "I am the body" of its own accord. Some one else says so. The unlimited Self does not. Who else is he that says so? A spurious 'I' arises between the Pure Consciousness and the insentient body and imagines itself limited to the body. Seek this and it will vanish as a phantom. That phantom is the ego, or the mind or the individuality.

All the sastras are based on the rise of this phantom, whose elimination is their purpose. The present state is mere illusion. Disillusionment is the goal and nothing more.

D.: The mind is said to be a bundle of thoughts.

M.: Because it functions on account of a single root—the 'I'-thought.

मानसंतु किं मार्गणेकृते नैव मानसं मार्ग आर्जवात्

Mānasantu kiṃ mārgane krte naiva mānasam mārga ārjavāt.

It has no real existence as a separate entity.

D.: Are not thoughts projections from the mind?

M.: In that case the mind is taken to be synonymous with the 'I'-thought or the ego.

15th December, 1937

428. Sri Bhagavan has selected 10 stanzas from that famous work of Sri Sankara—"*Sivananda Lahari*"—describing devotion (*bhakti*):

(1) What is *bhakti?*

Just as the *ankola* fruit falling from the tree rejoins it or a piece of iron is drawn to a magnet, so also thoughts, after rising up, lose themselves in their original source. This is *bhakti.* The original source of thoughts is the feet of the Lord, Isvara. Love of His Feet forms *bhakti.*

(2) Fruit of *bhakti:*

The thick cloud of *bhakti,* formed in the transcendental sky of the Lord's Feet, pours down a rain of Bliss (*ānanda*) and fills the lake of mind to overflowing. Only then the *jiva,* always transmigrating to no useful end, has his real purpose fulfilled.

(3) Where to place *bhakti?*

Devotion to gods, who have themselves their origin and end, can result in fruits similarly with origin and end. In order to be in Bliss everlasting our devotion must be directed to its source, namely the Feet of the ever blissful Lord.

(4) *Bhakti* is a matter only for experience and not for words:

How can Logic or other polemics be of real use? Can the *ghatapata's* (favourite examples of the logicians, meaning the pot and the cloth) save you in a crisis? Why then waste yourself thinking of them and on discussion? Stop exercising the vocal organs and giving them pain. Think of the Feet of the Lord and drink the nectar!

(5) Immortality is the fruit of Devotion:

At the sight of him who in his heart has fixed the Lord's Feet, Death is reminded of his by-gone disastrous encounter with Markandeya and flees away.

All other gods worship only Siva, placing their crowned heads at His feet. Such involuntary worship is only natural to Siva.

Goddess Liberation, His consort, always remains part of Him.

(6) If only Devotion be there—the conditions of the *jiva* cannot affect him.

However different the bodies, the mind alone is lost in the Lord's Feet. Bliss overflows!

(7) Devotion always unimpaired:

Wherever or however it be, only let the mind lose itself in the Supreme. It is Yoga! It is Bliss! Or the Yogi or the Bliss incarnate!

(8) *Karma Yoga* also is *Bhakti*:

To worship God with flowers and other external objects is troublesome. Only lay the single flower, the heart, at the feet of Siva and remain at Peace. Not to know this simple thing and to wander about! How foolish! What misery!

(9) This Karma Yoga puts an end to one's *samsāra*:

Whatever the order of life (*āsrama*) of the devotee, only once thought of, Siva relieves the devotee of his load of *samsāra* and takes it on Himself.

(10) Devotion is *Jnāna*:

The mind losing itself in Siva's Feet is Devotion. Ignorance lost! Knowledge! Liberation!

16th December, 1937

429. A few ladies had come from Bangalore. One among them asked: The world is composed of differences, from our point of view. How shall we be able to get

over these differences and comprehend the One Essence of all things?

M.: The differences are the result of the sense of doership (*kartritva*). The fruits will be destroyed if the root is destroyed. So relinquish the sense of doership; the differences will vanish and the essential reality will reveal itself.

In order to give up the sense of doership one must seek to find out who the doer is. Enquire within; the sense of doership will vanish. *Vichāra* (enquiry) is the method.

22nd December, 1937

430. A Marathi gentleman asked: I have read much about Self-Realisation; I do *japa, puja,* etc.; nothing seems to satisfy me. Can Sri Bhagavan kindly guide me?

M.: What is that you seek to gain? Everyone seeks happiness. Happiness is one's lot in everyday sleep. Bring about that state of happiness even in the waking state. That is all.

D.: I do not follow. How is it to be done?

M.: *Ātma Vichāra* is the Way.

D.: It seems too difficult to adopt, being so intangible. What shall I do if I feel unfit for this method of enquiry?

M.: Guidance is there. It is for individuals to avail themselves of it.

25th December, 1937

431. A Telugu gentleman stood up and asked: The mind is said to be pure when all its *vāsanās* are wiped out. It is also the finality. When there is something to be gained is it not duality?

M.: Let the mind be first made pure. If the same question arises thereafter the answer may then be sought.

26th December, 1937

432. An Andhra visitor asked: What is sleep?

M.: Why, you experience it every day.

D.: I want to know exactly what it is, so that it may be distinguished from *samādhi*.

M.: How can you know sleep when you are awake? The answer is to go to sleep and find out what it is.

D.: But I cannot know it in this way.

M.: This question must be raised in sleep.

D.: But I cannot raise the question then.

M.: So, that is sleep.

Sri Bhagavan went out for a few minutes. On his return the same man asked:

Self-realised *jnānis* are seen to take food and do actions like others. Do they similarly experience the states of dream and of sleep?

M.: Why do you seek to know the state of others, may be *jnānis*? What do you gain by knowing about others? You must seek to know your own real nature.

Who do you think that you are? Evidently, the body.

D.: Yes.

M.: Similarly, you take the *jnāni* to be the visible body whereon the actions are super-imposed by you. That makes you put these questions. The *jnāni* himself does not ask if he has the dream or sleep state. He has no doubts himself. The doubts are in you. This must convince you of your wrong premises. The *jnāni* is not the body. He is the Self of all.

The sleep, dream, *samādhi*, etc., are all states of the *ajnānis*. The Self is free from all these. Here is the answer for the former question also.

D.: I sought to know the state of *sthita prajnata* (unshaken knowledge).

M.: The *sāstras* are not for the *jnāni*. He has no doubts to be cleared. The riddles are for *ajnānis* only. The *sāstras* are for them alone.

D.: Sleep is the state of nescience and so it is said of *samādhi* also.

M.: *Jnāna* is beyond knowledge and nescience. There can be no questions about that state. It is the Self.

433. Mr. Thomas, Professor of Sanskrit, University of Oxford, had presided over the Oriental Conference in Trivandrum and on his way to Calcutta he visited Sri Bhagavan. He is an elderly gentleman with a broad forehead and a quiet manner. He speaks softly and slowly. He evinces great interest in oriental literature, especially Sanskrit. He had heard of the richness of Tamil. He desired to know which of the English translations of *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* was the best. The hall was crowded and a few of them mentioned, with each his own opinion, Thibaut's, Mahadeva Sastri's, Telang's, etc. Sri Bhagavan made mention of F. T. Brooks. Mr. Thomas desires one in metrical form because it is the proper vehicle for *rasa* (the Essence) contained in it. *Rasa* is also Peace, he said.

M.: Yes, Brahman is only *rasa*.

D.: *Rasa* is also Bliss.

M.: *Rasa, Ananda,* Peace are all names for the same Bliss.

The Professor was shown Mr. Grant Duff's speech in the Philosophical Conference held at Paris. Later the book "*Dharma*" by Dr. G. H. Mees was placed in his hands, on seeing which he asked what Sri Bhagavan thought of castes.

M.: The castes relate to bodies and not to Self. The Self is Bliss. To realise Bliss one realises the Self. No need to worry oneself about caste, etc.

D.: The *ahamkār* is also called the self.

M.: *Ahamkār* is limited, whereas the Self is beyond it.

D.: There is much literature in English relating to Eastern philosophy and religion. There are different exponents. The system of Ramanuja is well presented. Prof. Radhakrishnan expounds the *advaitic* system. He lays more stress on experience than on evidence. Sankara shows a highly developed mind.

A discussion followed on direct perception. The Professor spoke of mental perception also as different from sense perception.

M.: To infer one's existence no other evidence is necessary. The *indriyas* (senses) and the mind arising from the ego cannot serve as evidence relating to the Self. The Self is their basis. They do not exist independently of the Self. One's own existence is self-evident. Bliss is the Self. All become dear only owing to the love of Self.

D.: Love postulates duality. How can the Self be the object of love?

M.: Love is not different from the Self. Love of an object is of an inferior order and cannot endure. Whereas the Self is Love, in other words, God is Love.

D.: It is also the Christian idea.

He also asked Sri Bhagavan which of the methods was the best for the attainment of the goal. Is not Patanjali's the best?

M.: *Yogas chitta vritti nirodhah*—(Yoga is to check the mind from changing),—which is acceptable to all. That is also the goal of all. The method is chosen according to one's own fitness. The goal for all is the same. Yet different names are given to the goal only to suit the process preliminary to reaching the goal. *Bhakti, Yoga, Jnāna* are all the same. *Svasvarupānusadhām bhaktirity abhidhiyate* (Self-contemplation is called *bhakti*).

D.: Does Sri Bhagavan advocate *advaita?*

M.: *Dvaita* and *advaita* are relative terms. They are based on the sense of duality. The Self is as it is. There is neither *dvaita* nor *advaita.* I AM THAT I AM. Simple Being is the Self.

D.: This is not *māyavāda.*

M.: The mind is *māyā.* Reality lies beyond the mind. So long as the mind functions there is duality, *māyā,* etc. Once it is transcended the Reality shines forth. Although it is said to shine forth Self-effulgence is the Self.

D.: It is Sat-chid-ānanda.

M.: Sat-chid-ānanda is said to indicate that the Supreme is not *asat* (different from unreal), not *achit* (different from insentient) and not *anānanda* (different from unhappiness). Because we are in the phenomenal world we speak of the Self as *Sacchidānanda.*

D.: *Aham* 'I' applies to the individual and also to Brahman. It is rather unfortunate.

M.: It is *upādhi bheda* (owing to different limiting adjuncts). The bodily limitations pertain to the *aham* ('I') of the *jiva,* whereas the universal limitations pertain to the *aham* ('I') of Brahman. Take off the *upādhi* (limiting adjunct); the 'I' (*Aham*) is pure and single.

D.: Does Bhagavan give *diksha* (Initiation)?

M.: *Mauna* (silence) is the best and the most potent *diksha.* That was practised by Sri Dakshināmurti. Touch, look, etc., are all of a lower order. Silence (*mauna diksha*) changes the hearts of all. There is no Guru and no disciple. The *ajnāni* confounds his body with the Self and so he takes the other's body for the Guru. But does the Guru think his body to be the Self? He has transcended the body. There are no differences for Him. So the *ajnāni* cannot appreciate the standpoint of Guru and of sishya.

D. : Is there then no difference between the one and the other ?

M. : There are differences from the stand-point of the phenomenal world but not from that of Reality.

The Professor was thankful. He hoped to appreciate Sri Bhagavan's writings better after having seen Him and conversed with Him.

In the course of conversation, Sri Bhagavan said that *Upāsana, Dhyāna* are possible so long as there is the mind and they must cease with the cessation of the mind. They are mere preliminaries to final eradication of thoughts and the stillness of mind.

D. : *Saiva Siddhānta* postulates three fundamentals as being eternal. Is it opposed to *Vedānta ?*

M. : The three entities are *Jiva,* God and bondage. Such trinities are common in all religions. They are true so long as the mind is operative. They are mere creations of the mind. One can postulate God only after the mind arises. God is not different from the Self. The Self is objectified as God. So also with Guru.

The Professor returned in the evening and asked something about good actions. He further wondered why Brahman is said to be *sacchidānanda,* but not good.

M.: *Sat* denotes being beyond *sat* and *asat* ;
Chit beyond *chit* and *achit ;*
Anandā beyond bliss and non-bliss.

What is it then ? Even if not *sat* nor *asat,* It must be admitted to be *sat* only. Compare the term *jnāna.* It is the state beyond knowledge and ignorance. Yet *jnāna* is not ignorance but knowledge. So also with *Sat-chidānanda.*

D. : It favours the one aspect.

After a word about *Atma-vichāra* he took leave saying that he would not trouble Sri Maharshi any further although he had several doubts yet to be cleared and that he wanted to make *nididhyāsana* of what he had heard so far.

A judge from Mysore asked: *Upāsana, dhyāna* were said to be due to mental activities. Cessation of activities was also said to be Realisation. Now, how to realise without *upāsana* or *dhyāna*?

M.: They are preliminaries. Such action will lead to the desired inaction.

D.: The Heart is said to be experienced on the right. Physiologically it is on the left.

M.: Spiritual experience is spoken of.

D.: Is it the psychic heart?

M.: Yes.

D.: How to know that it is on the right?

M.: By experience.

D.: Is there any indication to that effect?

M.: Point out to yourself and see.

28th December, 1937

434. Being Christmas holidays, there is a great rush of visitors from far and near. A group of them sat down and two among them asked as follows:

D.: Do you know English?

Prompted to ask questions, he continued:

D.: Have you realised your Self?

Sri Bhagavan smiled and said, "Go on, continue."

D.: Have you experienced *Nirvikalpa Samādhi*?

He was asked to finish his questions.

D.: Can you enter into *Nirvikalpa Samādhi* at will? Is it not necessary that sages should influence their surroundings?

Another man asked:

Can Sri Bhagavan help us to realise the Truth?

M.: Help is always there.

D.: Then there is no need to ask questions. I do not feel the ever-present help.

M.: Surrender and you will find it.

D.: I am always at your feet. Will Bhagavan give us some *upadesha* to follow? Otherwise how can I get the help living 600 miles away?

M.: *That Sadguru* is within.

D.: *Sadguru* is necessary to guide me to understand it.

M.: That *Sadguru* is within.

D.: I want a visible Guru.

M.: That visible Guru says that He is within.

D.: Can I throw myself at the mercy of the *Sadguru?*

M.: Yes. Instructions are necessary only so long as one has not surrendered oneself.

D.: Is no particular time necessary for meditation?

M.: Meditation depends on strength of mind. It must be unceasing, even when one is engaged in work. Particular time is meant for novices.

D.: Will *Sadguru* place His hand on my head to assure me of His help? I will have the consolation that His promise will be fulfilled.

M.: A bond will be the next requisition and a suit will be filed if you imagine no help forthcoming. (Laughter).

D.: May I come near, Sir? (for blessing).

M.: Such doubts should not arise in you. They contradict your statement of surrender. *Sadguru* is always on your head.

D.: Surrender comes after effort.

M.: Yes, it becomes complete in due course.

D.: Is a teacher necessary for instructions?

M.: Yes, if you want to learn anything new. But here you have to unlearn.

D.: Yet a teacher is necessary.

M.: You have already got what you seek elsewhere. So no teacher is necessary.

D.: Is there any use of the man of Realisation for the seeker?

M.: Yes. He helps you to get rid of your delusion that you are not realised.

D.: So, tell me how.

M.: The paths are meant only to de-hypnotise the individual.

D.: De-hypnotise me. Tell me what method to follow.

M.: Where are you now? Where should you go?

D.: I know 'I am'; but I do not know what I am.

M.: Are there two 'I's then?

D.: It is begging the question.

M.: Who says this? Is it the one who is, or is it the other who does not know what he is?

D.: I am, but do not know what or how?

M.: 'I' is always there.

D.: Does the 'I' undergo any transformation, say in death?

M.: Who witnesses the transformation?

D.: You seem to speak *jnāna yoga*. This is *jnāna yoga*.

M.: Yes, it is.

D.: But surrender is *bhakti yoga*.

M.: Both are the same.

After some time the man continued:

Then I have to conclude that I am Consciousness and that nothing occurs except by my presence.

M.: It is one thing to conclude it by reasoning and another thing to be convinced.

The other man continued:

I shall wait three months and see if help is forthcoming. Now, may I have the assurance?

M.: Is this what is asked by one who has surrendered?

Four visitors retired. The same man continued to say "Fulfil your promise". (Laughter).

He also said:

God has given me enough for bread and butter and I am happy. In addition I want peace of mind. Hence this request.

29th December, 1937

435. Two ladies and two gentlemen from Ceylon.

D.: Have you realised God? If so, in what shape?

M.: Who remains there to see God? The question might well be if one has known oneself.

D.: I have known myself.

M.: Is the 'I' different from the Self that you say you have known the Self?

D.: I know the Self as identical with the body. If the Self be different from the body let Bhagavan tell me how to see the Self separate from the body. He has realised God. He can teach me.

M.: Why should the Self be separated from the body? Let the body remain as it is.

D.: The soul when disembodied can see through all bodies.

M.: Are there others then? Or is there even your own body? Consider your sleep—You do not know your body then. But still you are there all the same. Did you then perceive the world through this or other bodies? Nevertheless, you cannot deny your existence then. There must be a subject to see the world and the subject must also be limited. If unlimited how can there be others beside the unlimited Self?

D.: Does God have any limits?

M.: Leave God alone. What limits were there for your Self in your sleep?

D.: Death must then be the highest state.

M.: Yes. We are now living in Death. Those who have limited the unlimited Self have committed suicide by putting on such limitations.

D.: Concentrate on the Self, you say. How to do it?

M.: If that is solved everything else is solved.

D.: Know thyself, you say. How to know the Self?

M.: You now know that you are the body.

D.: *Rāja yoga* realises through the body, senses, etc., and Sri Bhagavan advises realisation by thinking. This is *jnāna yoga.*

M.: How can you think without the body?

D.: God does not think?

M.: Why then did you start asking, "In what shape did you see God?"

D.: God must be felt through the senses.

M.: Are you not now feeling God?

D.: Is everybody feeling God always?

M.: Yes.

D.: Then what is realisation?

M.: Realisation is to get rid of the delusion that you have not realised.

D.: I don't catch the point.

They left, having taken a snap shot.

436. *D.:* What is *visvarupa?*

M.: It is to see the world as the Self of God. In the "*Bhagavad Gita*" God is said to be various things and beings, and also the whole universe. How to realise it or see it so? Can one see one's Self? Though not seen, can the Self be denied? What is the Truth?

D.: Is it then wrong to say that some have seen it?

M.: It is true in the same degree as you are. The "*Gita*" begins saying that no one was born; in the fourth chapter it says, "the numerous incarnations, yours and mine, have taken place; I know them but you do not." Of these two statements, which is the truth? The instruction is according to the listener's understanding. If the second chapter contains the whole Truth, why should so many more chapters follow it?

In the Bible God says "I AM before Abraham." He does not say "I was" but "I AM".

437. *M.*: People have read of Vivekananda having asked Sri Ramakrishna, "Have you seen God?" and imitate him now. They also ask, "Have you realised God?"

I ask what is *realisation*.

Realisation implies perfection. When you are limited, your perception also is limited. Your knowledge is thus imperfect. Of what value is that imperfect knowledge?

In *Visvarupa Darshan,* Arjuna is told to see whatever he desired and not what was presented before him. How can that *Darshan* be real?

30th December, 1937

438. A visitor asked: For beginners like me which is most suited: either worship of qualified God or contemplation of "I am Brahman"?

M.: The answer is contained in the question. The question itself shows it to be worship of qualified God.

D.: "I" is felt in the waking and dream states but not in deep sleep. Why so?

M.: If so, does it not exist in deep sleep?

D.: Because there are mental modes in these two states and no such mode in the other.

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